Commentary

Volume Seventy, Number Two, August 1980

"Peace Now" & American Jews

Ruth R. Wisse

Czechoslovakia 1938—Israel 1980

Steven Plaut

How to Pay for Survival
Herbert Stein

The Travels of Malcolm Cowley
Robert Alter

Paradoxes of Population
Eric M. Breindel & Nick Eberstadt

Lesson for the Day—A Story
Richard Stern

From the Diary of a Softballer
Edward Grossman

MOVIES: Celebrating Defeat
Richard Grenier

BOOKS IN REVIEW
Charles Horner / Daniel Pipes / Dan Hofstadter / Jonathan D. Sarna / Elliott Abrams

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ing cars be that easy. And some pretty primitive precautions—not to mention sophisticated laws that would make trafficking in stolen cars a Federal offense—can help.

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[1]Auto theft is no longer a "cottage industry": it's a huge racket that costs the American people $2 billion a year.

[2]The National Auto Theft Bureau also suggests: using a vibrator pencil, etch the vehicle identification number in several hard-to-find spots. Use your imagination: the more unique your hiding place, the more exasperating to a thief!

[3]About 20% of stolen cars are driven away with the keys the owner left *in the ignition;* in another 20%, keys are transparently "hidden" above the visor, in the glove compartment or under the driver's seat. Locking your car won't protect it from a professional thief, but it will protect it from the joy-riding teenagers who account for many thefts.

[4]These devices only slow down a professional thief, but the more time it takes him, the more chance he'll be caught. Locking systems, cut-off switches and security alarms are all available at auto supply stores.

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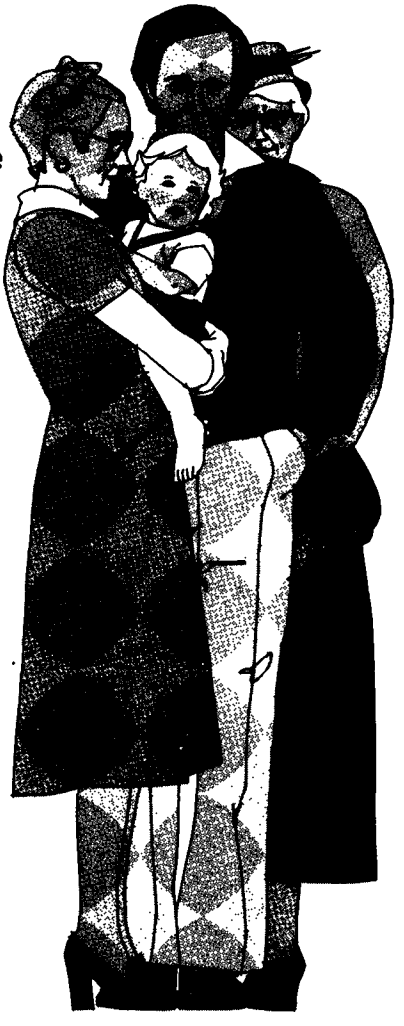

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Letters from Readers

Vietnam

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I would like to make the following observations on Charles Horner's article, "America Five Years After Defeat" [April]. I am a graduate of Georgetown Law School (1968), and spent the years from 1965 to 1968 in Washington. During this period, the anti-war movement built up its momentum, and Washington was the focal point of its activities. I attended almost all of the anti-war demonstrations of those years. I was not an activist, but as a student I wanted to see and observe this major movement, and since I was in ROTC, I faced going to Vietnam upon graduation. I was much impressed by the rhetoric of the movement, and had a great deal of empathy with the feelings that were evoked by the movement as well as with the other cultural currents which were sucked into the vortex of the movement.

In 1968, I did enter the army as an infantry officer and, after attending language school, found myself in Vietnam. . . . My first impression was striking: everything that had been said about Vietnam during my Washington days was true—but it wasn't like that at all. . . . There was a halo of unreality hovering over everything that the peace movement had said about what I was then experiencing.

During my Vietnam tour, the big pullouts of U.S. forces began. My area, near Saigon, was one of the first to face major pullouts and the turnover of U.S. bases. . . . About the time I was approaching the end of my tour, I spoke with my commanding officer, who had arrived and was leaving at about the same time as I was. I asked him if he had noticed any change in the Vietnamese during our tour. His answer surprised me in that it precisely echoed my own observations. He said, "Yes, they have contempt for us."

I could speak on that "contempt" for a long time. With all our vaunted wealth and force, we had not beaten the enemy, and we were turning the war over to them and leaving. I frankly thought that we had fought the war all wrong. We had not engaged in the war as men fighting men, but as a huge agglomeration of hardware. It had not worked, and we were pulling out. The Vietcong had seen through our imperial clothes. . . .

For the ten years since my return from Vietnam I have pondered the arguments I heard against the war. Mr. Horner's lucid article is one of the best I have seen—it begins to put our experience into perspective.

One of the arguments so vigorously put forward by the anti-war movement was in the form of a rhetorical question: why are we in Vietnam? The question was hard to answer at the time. Vietnam was said to be not strategically important; it had no minerals, oil, or other resources we needed badly. Therefore, the question went: what are we fighting for?

To me, the answer to that question had been ringing in my mind since January 20, 1961, when President Kennedy had inspired me and the nation, saying that we would "bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, and oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty around the globe."

But this ideal was not "operative" for the peace movement. One of my friends in Vietnam was a Vietnamese major who had fought with the Vietminh against the French. He used to tell me about his exploits against the French with great relish. One time I asked him why, if he fought with the Vietminh, he was not with the Vietcong now. His answer was straightforward: "They don't dance; they are not human." On another occasion I asked him why he did not view the Americans as enemies like the French. He asked me in return, "Where are the children when you walk into a village?" "They come running all around me," I said. "When a French soldier walked into a village," he replied, "the children ran and hid."

Perhaps the problem revolves around a change in the meaning of one word—ideals. Today, a person who is said to be idealistic is one who has a utopian view of the world, who believes that the world is nice and that if everyone acted naturally all would be good. An idealist today is one who is easily frustrated; the slightest obstacle seems to be a contradiction of the ideal.

But when I was growing up, the term "ideal" had a different mean-

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ing. One who held to an ideal was one who deeply believed in a quality or principle, and who committed himself to uphold it despite all obstacles. To choose an ideal was serious business. It meant that one would be tested, tempted, intimidated, perhaps to the point of death, if necessary, for the sake of that ideal.

Vietnam, since my tour there, has always seemed to me to be the most "idealistic" war almost any nation has ever engaged in. In fighting it, we seemed to have nothing to gain from victory. . . . The assault on the decency of an ideal which was to be held at any price was the major focus of the anti-war movement. If a tangible gain could not be shown, then the war was immoral and men should not be asked to fight in it. So went the moral argument. This position, however, always seemed to me to imply that America's defense of the free world was also immoral, unless the payoff was clear.

As Mr. Horner points out, the thread running through all the arguments is that "the mere existence of American power, as such" is the evil. Thus the anti-war movement, having argued that we cannot use American power morally if we cannot show what there is to gain, seized morality as its criterion, and next argued that neither can we use American power if there *is* something to gain—for that would be to use power for selfish ends. The only way to get off the horns of that dilemma would be to destroy American power.

Mr. Horner ends his article by raising the issue of "a fit test of the spirit and character of our country." Vietnam was a fit test of whether we could hold on to our ideals in the face of obstacles. His article convinces me that we have not failed that test—yet. I am very proud of what America tried to to in that war, and proud of my chance to have served in it.

It seems an ironic tragedy that the consequences of defeat have not fallen on those who argued so strongly for it. As a letter writer in the same issue of COMMENTARY put it, the attitude of such people would seem to be, "Let justice be done though the heavens fall—after all, they won't fall on me." In fact, their criterion for judging the war was ironically moral in their terms, for their "justice" lifted them to seats of power in government, above the heavens which have indeed fallen upon the people of Southeast Asia.

Finally, I would like to thank Mr. Horner for reaffirming the "plain pride" which I feel in my own personal experience in Vietnam, and in what my country was trying to uphold there. . . .

BENJAMIN NOVAK
State College, Pennsylvania

CHARLES HORNER writes:

Benjamin Novak's letter is a reminder that those who served in the armed forces in Vietnam have a unique relationship to everything which has happened since. Their situation speaks to a larger point, or at least helps illustrate it. In our own civilization, since the time of the Greeks, we have believed that one mark of a civilized state is its manner of treating its war dead. We recall from the *Iliad*, for example, that after Achilles kills Hector, he drags the body around the city walls. Hector's father, the old man Priam, is forced to come to the camp of the Greeks and plead for the return of his son's body so that it may be given a proper burial. The episode, of course, is an affront both to men and to the gods, and one may suppose that Achilles' fate has something to do with this outrage. In Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* there is a passage which concerns a successful Athenian naval battle. Because of a storm the Athenian commander returns to port without first retrieving the bodies of those who have been washed overboard. This provokes controversy in the Athenian democracy.

One may say that in democratic societies especially there is an important bond among citizens, government, and warriors. There can be no more solemn decision by a democracy than the decision to send men to war. But that decision implies a pact, a pact which insures the warrior that he will be honored for what he has done and, at worst, that his body will receive a decent burial. This is more than subliminally important. The United States Marine Corps, which is, after all, that branch of our military forces still most concerned with fighting as such, adheres to a basic principle: "We do not leave our people." To volunteer to return to the site of an engagement in order to retrieve dead bodies—surely this can have no military significance. Why risk lives to do it? Because it is fundamental; a man who fights draws something from the foreknowledge that his comrades will come for him no matter what.

But in Vietnam, this country did something profoundly offensive, something of homeric proportions. The pact was broken, and not merely because we failed to retrieve all of the bodies in a literal sense. We failed to honor the men we sent. Worse, we placed them and what they did under moral taint, leading many of them to believe that they themselves have somehow been cursed. Yet no matter how elaborate the intellectual edifice men use to explain away the fundamental violation of the pact between warrior and society, there is something deep inside them which causes them to *know* that what they have done is wrong. Indeed, they know that what they have done is cowardly. Many human failings—lying, theft, deceit, and others—can at times, one supposes, have useful instrumental effects. But there is one thing which can never produce even short-term benefits. As Solzhenitsyn has written, "The price of cowardice will always be evil." We are paying that price now. It is not only that what has happened in Southeast Asia since our defeat there has been terrible beyond all imagining. It is also the knowledge that we could have prevented it if we had not abandoned our warriors. Our current inability to do anything about what is now happening there shames us, especially since we forfeited the opportunity to do something when we had the chance.

All this is now an indelible part of our history and it will never be forgotten. It will, in some way, no matter how vague, haunt the mind of every man who is ever called upon to bear arms in defense of the United States. It may not have ruined us as a country, though it is having its effects. But it is unsettling. Having now learned that we are indeed, as a country, capable of such behavior, we will always wonder whether we will crack once again. And wondering whether we will crack, we will somehow seek to avoid another test, until the test is imposed on us in such an overwhelming fashion that we will have no choice. And because we will postpone the next test as long as possible, it is clear that no matter how it turns out, no matter whether we win or lose, the costs will be astronomically higher than they otherwise would have been.

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The student of history knows, of course, that this is the way of the world, that there is no special reason why the United States should not have experienced what others have experienced in like measure. Still, it is a watershed of sorts in our affairs, and we shall have to live with it.

Those Americans who fought in Southeast Asia brought honor to themselves and could have brought it to their country if their country had been up to it. For many of those whom we failed this must be a particularly galling time. Having done nothing to contribute to our present predicament, they must nonetheless suffer along with the rest, and, inevitably, they will be called on again so that things, at some last desperate moment, may perhaps be put right once again.

Whose Palestine?

To the Editor of Commentary:

Hillel Halkin's sensitive and otherwise excellent article, "Whose Palestine?—An Open Letter to Edward Said" [May], is marred by his erroneous reference to "the land area of mandated Palestine" as comprising only the territory west of the Jordan River. As Eugene Rostow has pointed out, there is no meaningful legal or historic definition of Palestine other than that contained in the Mandate. In fact, mandatory Palestine encompassed Jordan (formerly known as Transjordan) as well as Judea, Samaria, Gaza, and pre-1967 Israel.

Present-day Jordan, which formed a portion of mandatory Palestine until 1946 when it achieved its independence from British rule, consists of 78 percent of Palestine, and the portion of Palestine west of the Jordan River consists of only 22 percent of mandatory Palestine. Accordingly, pre-1967 Israel comprises only 17 percent of Palestine and the areas known as the West Bank and Gaza are under 5 percent of Palestine.

The confusion arises from the fact that in 1922 Britain suspended the Jewish National Home Provision of the Mandate in "the province of Transjordan," although British rule continued in that province until 1946. Western Palestine, containing approximately 10,000 square miles, is now often considered erroneously to be historic Palestine. The PLO is under no such misconception. Article 2 of its National Covenant states, "Palestine with its boundaries that existed at the time of the British Mandate is an integral regional unit." Thus, two states now exist in historic Palestine: Jordan, a majority of whose population is composed of Palestinian Arabs, and Israel, which now controls less than one-quarter of historic Palestine. Mr. Halkin's thesis is even more compelling when viewed within the context of the above facts.

Whether a third successor state should be created in mandatory Palestine is now a contentious issue, but its resolution must be anchored in historical and geographical realities.

Roger A. Gerber
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Whose Palestine? Why, the Arabs' of course. Bits of historic Israel have been absorbed by the surrounding nations and almost 80 percent of mandated Palestine, most of the proposed Jewish homeland, is now Jordan. But UN pamphlets on Palestine do not even mention Jordan as having been part of the Mandate. . . . These pamphlets discuss the 20 percent of mandated Palestine allotted to the Jews as though it were all of mandated Palestine. . . . Thus almost 80 percent of ancient Israel is lost in the shuffle, and now out of the 20 percent left to the Jews, the UN would take another part, for another Arab homeland. . . .

Zvi Asher Feinstein
New Haven, Connecticut

To the Editor of Commentary:

Hillel Halkin should not be surprised at Edward Said's insensitivity to Jews as people. My family's experience in Tripolitania from the advent of Islam to the early 20th century has led me to conclude that the Arabs are nothing but bigots. Edward Said has written nothing to persuade me otherwise.

In January 1977 Eldridge Cleaver reported in the Boston *Herald American* that "having lived intimately for several years among the Arabs I know them to be among the most racist people on earth. This is particularly true of their attitude toward black people. . . . Many Arab families that can afford to keep one or two black slaves to do their menial labor. Sometimes they own an entire family. I have seen such slaves with my own eyes."

It is a measure of left-wing silliness and anti-Semitism that a bigoted, slave-holding Arab religious fanatic who refuses to live in peace with Oriental Jews can be a freedom fighter while a Polish Zionist, who is willing to live with Oriental Jews, and was willing to live with the Arabs until they started shooting at him, is called a racist.

Joachim Martillo
New Haven, Connecticut

To the Editor of Commentary:

I am sure many readers will praise Hillel Halkin's perceptive and sensitive article. Though such praise is fully deserved, I am disturbed by some of his expressions which, regrettably, have become common among Israelis.

The use of such expressions constitutes an acceptance of Arab distortions as facts, and ranges in Mr. Halkin's case from seemingly marginal matters such as the implication that residents of Talbieh and Katamon were "driven out as refugees" to his referring to Israeli forces as "conquering troops." I realize that these expressions are employed to show that even if one accepts Arab distortions and terminologies, one still finds that the Arabs hold completely unacceptable positions. Nevertheless, the cumulative effect of such expressions leads to a distorted picture of the nature of the conflict, one that serves the anti-Israel forces. The impression created is that the core of the problem is a conflict of interests between Israel and the "Palestinian nation." In Mr. Halkin's words, there are "two claims," each being "predicated upon a denial of the other."

But Zionism was never predicated on the denial of Arab rights. In fact, by accepting the partition plan, the Zionist movement recognized . . . the right of the Arabs to a part of Palestine, in addition to that part they had already gotten when Transjordan was created out of the area of mandated Palestine. The Arab rejection of that partition plan demonstrated two very important points: (1) The Arabs denied the right of the Jews to *any* part of Palestine, and (2) they denied the existence of a Palestinian Arab nation distinct from other Arab nations. Subsequently, Transjordan conquered Judea and Samaria, which later became known as the West Bank when the name of the country was changed to Jordan, and Egypt conquered the Gaza

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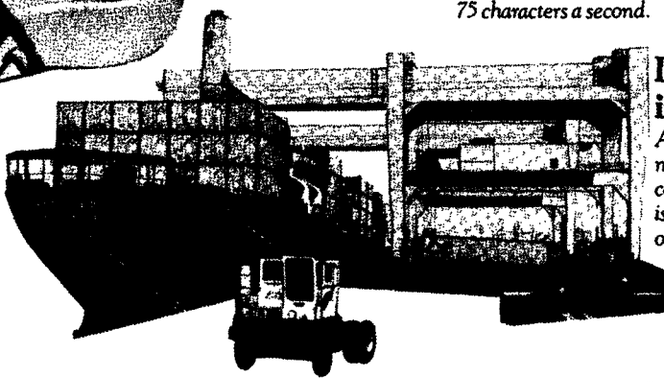

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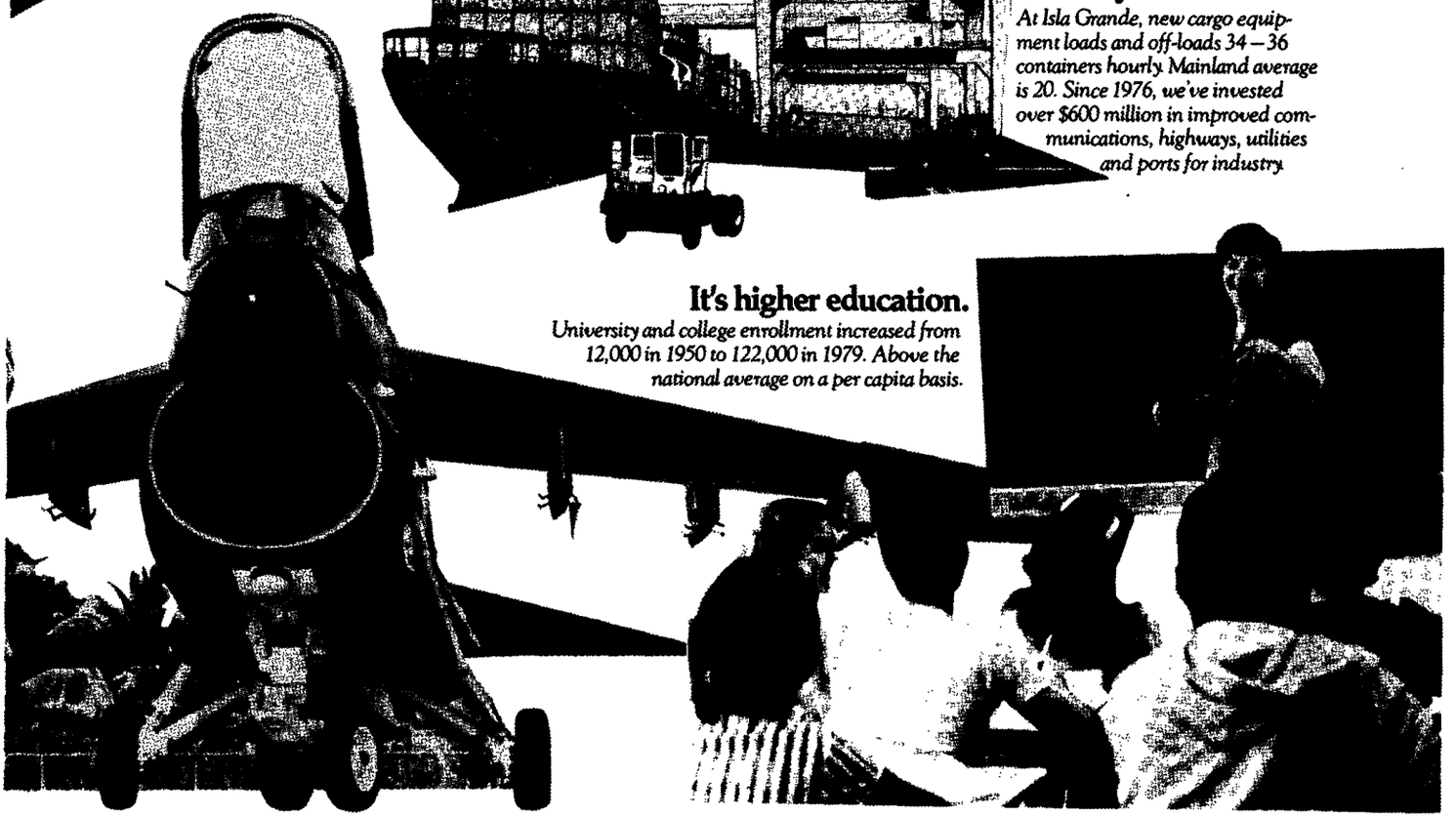

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Strip. Yet neither country made any attempt to establish Palestinian self-rule in these areas.

Mr. Halkin's "Open Letter," on the other hand, is full of expressions which assume that there is a Palestinian Arab nation that lives in a dispersion similar to the Jewish Diaspora; that the PLO is the undisputed leader of this nation; and that the PLO has done for the Palestinians what Zionism had done for the Jews. I take off my hat to the Arab propagandists who have succeeded in making most of the world, including very intelligent Israelis, use their terminology.

How does the above fiction jibe with the Palestinians being the majority in the population and in the government of Jordan? Are these Palestinians a part of the dispersion? Are their interests pursued by the PLO? What about the Israeli Arabs? Mr. Halkin appears to think that they are all part of the "Palestinian" (not just the Arab) nation. If only their leadership, namely the PLO, would become more reasonable and understand Jewish sensibilities, and agree to settle for an "unequal share of Palestine as a part of a final and irrevocable settlement between us," then Mr. Halkin would be "inclined to take the risk," and accept them. But surely Mr. Halkin should know that the PLO is not interested in negotiating with Israel, let alone under the above conditions. Its strategy is to let the Egyptians and Americans (and the West Europeans) wrest as many concessions as they can from the Israelis *without* the PLO having to make any concessions or change its covenant or even imply acceptance of Israel within *any* borders. Since this strategy has been working well, I doubt they care how Mr. Halkin or other Israelis "relate" to them.

At no time was the Arab struggle against the effort to reestablish Jewish sovereignty in Israel a purely "Palestinian" one. In fact, before the Balfour Declaration the concept of the "Palestinians" as a distinct Arab group, let alone as a "nation," did not exist and it is debatable to what extent it exists even today. There were always many non-Palestinian Arabs and other Muslims in the forces attacking Jewish villages and among those who were devoting their time and effort to destroy Israel. It is not surprising to me that one of the attackers of the children's home in Misgav-Am was a Pakistani.

If the Palestinians have become distinct from other Arabs it is *because* of the Zionist development of Palestine. The Palestinian Arabs are often characterized (e.g., in UN reports) as the most highly skilled and educated group among the Arabs. This is a direct result of the Zionist effort in Palestine through serving as a model, through providing employment, through the payment of taxes which financed the school system established by the British Mandate, etc. (The British had a Mandate in Iraq as well, but there the educational levels were abysmal; the same was true of Transjordan.) Therefore, Mr. Halkin's gratuitous aside that no one argues any more that Zionism has been a boon to the Palestinian Arabs is not justified.

From its very beginning, Palestinian "nationalism" in general, and the PLO in particular, has been a negative movement. It is an anti-Israel movement composed of a variety of Arabs and other Muslims exploiting the plight of some of the Palestinian Arabs for the purpose of undermining Israel. They do not want a Palestinian state, big or small. What they want now, as they have wanted all along, is to get rid of Israel. What kind of Arab state they hope to establish in its place is quite secondary—for example, making the area a part of Syria would be quite acceptable to many of them.

What Mr. Halkin's article fails to make clear is that these attitudes were prevalent long before there were any "occupied territories." In that light, it is really pathetic to observe the surprise of many Israelis that in spite of the tremendous concessions they have made to Egypt (in this day and age, who would give up precious oil fields?) they are still scorned as "intransigent" by one and all, including the beneficiary of these unbelievable concessions, President Sadat. The only concession that will be acceptable is the liquidation of Israel. In view of this, for the Israelis to talk about the possibility of an "irrevocable settlement," willingly agreed to by the Arabs, is to engage in a dangerous pipe-dream.

ELIE HERSHLER

Chicago, Illinois

HILLEL HALKIN writes:

Roger A. Gerber and Zvi Asher Feinstein are right to point out that between 1918 and 1922 the 35,000 square miles of territory formerly known as Transjordan were a part of mandatory Palestine. Certainly it makes sense to contend that in the present kingdom of Jordan, over half of whose population is of Cisjordanian origin, Palestinian Arabs already have the framework for a state of their own. To speak of the country east of the Jordan as "historic Palestine" or "ancient Israel," however, is rather fanciful. Though much of this country may have been assigned by biblical tradition to the Twelve Tribes, the Bible also tells us that the Tribes east of the Jordan dropped out of the Israelite confederacy at an early stage, and apart from several chapters in the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua, the area hardly figures in biblical narrative at all. No historical Jewish sites of any importance are located in it and even in Second Temple and Mishnaic times, let alone later, its Jewish population was sparse. At the time of its separation from mandatory Palestine in 1922 not a single Jewish settlement, indeed not a single permanent Jewish resident, existed in it. The idea of a historical Jewish claim to it can thus hardly be taken seriously, and to lump such a claim together with the Jewish claim to the land west of the Jordan is anything but a service to the latter.

I agree with Joachim Martillo that Arab Muslims have generally behaved toward non-Arab and non-Muslim minorities in their midst in less than exemplary fashion. Yet saying that "Arabs are nothing but bigots" is every bit as silly as saying that "All whites are racists" or "All Jews dislike Gentiles." Surely there must be a sensible middle ground between a naive belief in the propagandistic myth of traditional Arab tolerance for others and an equally naive belief in the opposed myth of unregenerate Arab xenophobia—and it is on such ground that any rational Israeli policy toward the Arab world must be formed.

I can assure Elie Hershler that I have not been the dupe of Arab propagandists. I have no more faith than he does in the good intentions of the PLO or the Arab world as a whole toward Israel, and I am far from optimistic about the long-range prospects for peace between Israel and its neighbors. I also know that there is little ethnically to distinguish Palestinian

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The Liberal and Abortion

The liberal concept that the state itself must care for the poor was indeed a radical view at the beginning of this century.

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Arabs from the Arabs of Syria and Transjordan, and that a sense of Palestinian national identity is a recent historical development that might never have taken place were it not for Zionism and Israel. But such an identity has now been formed, and I am puzzled why Mr. Hershler thinks that its considerable success in presenting its case to the world is a reason for Israel to go on insisting that it does not exist or hoping that it will one day disappear as a factor from the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The problem with so many pro-Israel "hawks" like Mr. Hershler does not lie in understanding the logic of why they are against what they are against; it lies in understanding what they are for. Would Mr. Hershler have Israel make a deal with the Jordanians over the Palestinians' heads? There is nothing to indicate that such a deal is possible, or why in terms of Mr. Hershler's argument he should prefer it to a deal with the PLO. Does he want Israel to annex the occupied territories or to go on ruling them by military fiat forever against the will of their inhabitants? I should like to hear from him how he proposes that this be done in the face of the unanimous opposition of the countries of the world and the demographic inability of Israel itself to digest a million or more hostile Arabs living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip while remaining both a Jewish and a democratic state. (An inability partly caused, of course, by the fact that Jews like Mr. Hershler choose to go on living in the Diaspora and to give Israel the benefit of their militant advice from there.) In the end, I am afraid, Israel will have to attempt negotiating a settlement directly with the Palestinians not so much because abstract considerations of justice demand this of it as because practical political realities leave it no other alternative.

This does not mean that a settlement *can* be negotiated with them, or if negotiated it will hold up. It does mean, however, that before Israel resigns itself to the melancholy prospect of living permanently as a beleaguered garrison state fighting for survival against increasingly unfavorable odds, the Palestinian option must be seriously tried.

I regret Edward Said's failure to respond to my letter to him. His silence speaks eloquently for itself.

Work, Wages & Black Youth

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

One comment in Murray Friedman's article, "The New Black Intellectuals" [June], cries out for an answer. Professor William Julius Wilson disdains "menial jobs in low-wage industries" for black youths. If what we *wish* for black youths were at issue, no doubt Professor Wilson, Walter Williams, and I could all easily agree on wanting the best for them. But the issue is not our wishes. The real issue is making the best choice out of the options actually available. We need only look around any ghetto to see what the real alternatives are: unemployment, welfare, delinquency, and crime.

The so-called "minimum-wage" law does not create any additional options. On the contrary, it simply destroys some of the existing options. The idea that people will be better off with fewer options is one of the incredible notions of our times. The arrogance and inhumanity of it run through a whole spectrum of liberal-Left policies. The so-called minimum-wage law does not provide any minimum wage, any more than right-to-work laws provide any work. Wages have fallen to zero under the minimum-wage law for people—especially young blacks—who have become unemployed as a result of being priced out of the market.

If, instead of looking at the great political vision, we look at the actual history of group progress from poverty to affluence we see that it has invariably begun with those menial jobs or dead-end jobs so quickly dismissed today. Jewish workers in the 19th-century sweatshops, Chinese "coolie labor" on the West Coast railroads and in mining camps, Japanese agricultural field hands in Hawaii and California, were all beginning the long journey on which they would eventually surpass the Anglo-Saxons in income, education, and achievement. It may be significant that the one ethnic group that has entered American society almost entirely after the creation of "protective" labor legislation and the welfare state—the Puerto Ricans—are having a hell of a time getting started, and remain behind blacks in incomes and occupations, and have even higher rates of unemployment and female-headed families. (Just how far behind is partially concealed in national statistics, for there are many blacks and few Puerto Ricans in places like Mississippi and Alabama.) The old pat "legacy-of-slavery" argument just will not work for Puerto Ricans.

More important than the money that young people can earn on menial or dead-end jobs is the *experience* that is often desperately needed by ghetto youths from disorganized homes, unruly schools, and a dangerous street life. Some order and self-discipline has to enter their lives early on, if they are to have any chance at all down the road. They have to learn to organize their lives so that they can get to a particular place at a particular time every day; they have to learn to get along with fellow workers, not to blast their portable radios on the job; they have to learn how to treat rules as something other than a personal affront. Corny? Yes. But so are most of the things that make human life possible.

Nothing is easier—or more irresponsible—than to disdain the basics after you have yourself advanced far beyond that point. The rhetoric about dead-end jobs ignores the plain fact that the experience and references from one job are what most people use to get another job—even if in a completely different field. All the world is not civil service or academia, where promotions are laid out in advance. I have never received a real promotion in my life, and yet I no longer deliver groceries in Harlem. But thank God I had a chance to deliver those groceries when I did. Not only did I need the money; I needed still more a sense of reality about the world—which has survived even through decades of listening to intellectuals.

THOMAS SOWELL
University of California
Los Angeles, California

The Cousins Case

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I write to congratulate Florence A. Ruderman for her penetrating analysis of the Norman Cousins case ["A Placebo for the Doctor," May]. *Anatomy of an Illness* is a destructive and misleading book. That the medical profession should latch on to this case history, and proceed to legitimize it, is to celebrate a fad. As a doctor (I practice surgery in New Haven) I am outraged by the shabbiness and lack of

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control that Norman Cousins exhibits in his presentation. I am sadder, even, at the sheep-like acquiescence of the *New England Journal of Medicine* (which first published Cousins's article), the UCLA School of Medicine (where he now lectures), and, more personally, the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

Recently, I took part in a "Symposium on Medicine and Literature" sponsored by the Humanities Program at Johns Hopkins. I was one of four participants whose moderator and keynote speaker was Norman Cousins. The four participants had agreed to attend, understanding that the subject to be discussed was medicine and its relationship to literature. Two of us are physician-writers; two, literary scholars. To my dismay, Cousins delivered as his keynote address a scathing attack on the medical profession, replete with stale jokes in each of which the doctor was the butt, and the patient, the victim. At each of these jokes, the polite audience laughed. Whenever the doctor was not being lampooned, it was the hospital, particularly the kitchen, laboratory, and nursing services. And this at Johns Hopkins, where so much great medicine has been practiced for well over a century. The ensuing discussion was manipulated by Cousins so that it dealt only with matters of medical deficiency. . . .

Later, many of the visitors to the symposium, among them faculty of Johns Hopkins, confided to me their shock at the subversion of the conference for Cousins's own promotional purposes, and at the gratuitous attack on the medical profession as well. Of course, I have laid primary blame on Johns Hopkins for inviting Norman Cousins to be something which he is not, and for showing again that the medical profession is not immune to the power of the media.

[Dr.] RICHARD SELZER
New Haven, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

An admirer and obsessive reader of both the *New England Journal of Medicine* and COMMENTARY, I was pleased to see Florence A. Ruderman comment on a book which was an outgrowth of an article that had originally appeared in the *NEJM*.

Most *NEJM* readers read Norman Cousins's article with amusement, and I suspect far fewer of us than Miss Ruderman thinks were taken in by his theories. . . .

I think most of us physicians really did believe that Cousins's article was pleasant, well-written nonsense. He said he received letters from thousands of physicians, but I think that those of us who didn't take him seriously did not bother to write. . . . On reflection, however, the fact that the article was published in such an excellent journal as the *NEJM* makes me now think that Miss Ruderman is correct in taking us to task for our silence.

Miss Ruderman has done her homework well and her concept of disease and treatment is sounder than that of Norman Cousins. . . .

[Dr.] HARVEY N. MANDELL
Medical Director
The William W. Backus Hospital
Norwich, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Florence A. Ruderman neatly takes apart (dissects?) the Norman Cousins phenomenon and discloses all its inner workings. . . .

Why was Cousins's essay published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* and why did so many physicians supposedly praise it? I really don't know, but I will hazard a guess. . . . Doctors, who as everyone knows can barely read or write, are terribly in awe of intellectuals and artists. I should imagine that this is particularly true of the very clever and guilt-ridden people who edit the *NEJM*. . . .

There were parts of Cousins's essay that physicians could sympathize with unreservedly. Many people, myself among them, agreed fully with the portion dealing with the horrors of the workups. I for one cheered him when he defied the tedious rules. I know well that these have more to do with mass production than with the welfare of individual patients. . . .

Physicians responded to Cousins for yet another reason. . . . More people than is commonly believed go into medicine to be liked and respected. Many of us are spending a great deal of time and effort these days beating our breasts and pleading guilty to charges that we are insensitive to patients as people. (Sometimes in our zeal for remedies we go too far. At a recent week-long medical meeting I attended, a physician attired in ambiguous—hermaphroditic?—garb appeared on three different panels. Before he settled down to the business of the panels, he solemnly ex-

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plained each time that his dress was meant to communicate that he was untainted by sexist bias.)

I hope that Norman Cousins continues in health and happiness. If his beliefs make him feel better, I am all for them. . . . If people whom medicine cannot help are helped by reading Cousins, that is also fine. [But] if patients who can be helped by medicine begin to reject their doctors to follow Cousins, then indeed we will have a problem. But that problem will not have been caused by Cousins's appearance in the *NEJM* . . . but rather by the PR people working for Cousins and by the media which have been popularizing his views.

[Dr.] EDITH T. SHAPIRO
Englewood, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Here is at least one physician's appreciation and endorsement of Florence A. Ruderman's perceptive and sensible criticisms of Norman Cousins's *Anatomy of an Illness*. I must confess that I too was taken in at first by the smooth persuasiveness of his *NEJM* article. But I soon recognized its underlying inaccuracies, intended or unintended omissions or distortions, and particularly the disservice Cousins's views could do to patients and physicians in general. Perhaps his book should have been called: *Travesty of an Illness, Its Wondrous Cure by the Victim*.

The tremendous applause which Cousins received from the profession, crowned by his tragi-comic appointment to the faculty of a medical school, is probably best understood as an expression of guilt feelings on the part of physicians for having forsaken the art of medicine and having become technicians instead. I wonder whether it is because of such feelings that none of the various well-known and highly respected physicians who attended Cousins has come forward to comment on his book, his illness, or its management.

[Dr.] MARTIN G. GOLDNER
Palo Alto, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Cousins has cited the work of my group in his book and in a *Saturday Review* article. But both Cousins in his citations and Florence A. Ruderman in her COMMENTARY article indicate a lack of understanding of the physical/chemical basis of vitamin-C therapy and thus of its effects on temperature, sedimentation rate, and on cells. . . . All cells in our body are continuously coming together and then moving apart. If the cells begin to move apart permanently, an edematous condition develops and one could be described as becoming "unstuck." Mr. Cousins's condition, however, indicated that his cells were coming together permanently and thus were pathologically "stuck" together. This was shown particularly by his sedimentation rate.

The monitoring of a patient's blood-cell settling rates is analogous to the monitoring of a patient's temperature. Apart from some exceptional situations, the temperature measurements in themselves are not crucial. What is important in such measurements is that they reflect the state of the body and the bodily responses. By a similar logic, the rates at which red cells settle have no special importance in affecting the degree of health. Their special importance lies in their providing an index of the ability of any given substance, in this case vitamin C, to overcome the abnormal forces binding red cells together and even more importantly to disrupt the abnormal binding of the cells in any pathological tissues of the body. . . . While vitamin C is a relatively weak "unsticking" agent, Mr. Cousins's "intuition" served him well in using this agent in such large amounts. Miss Ruderman knows that a chemical's lack of recognition as an accepted treatment can well reflect medicine's lack of understanding of that chemical's mode of action.

Joy or depression or any emotion is accompanied by fluctuations in the level of agents (adrenalin, etc.) which disrupt contacts between cells and agents (macromolecules composing collagen, etc.) which promote sticking. There is thus a psychological component which is constantly and intimately involved in the physical/chemical action of any therapy.

BERNARD ECANOW
Wilmette, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Florence A. Ruderman's article, "A Placebo for the Doctor," raises a number of important questions concerning the reception accorded Norman Cousins and the book he has written about his recovery from a debilitating, possibly fatal, illness. That these questions do not appear to have been raised by members of the medical profession is indeed troubling. But also disturbing is Miss Ruderman's apparent lack of any sense of responsibility to seek answers to the questions she has formed prior to their publication in COMMENTARY. Did she, for example, attempt to ask Cousins whether his sedimentation rate was ever tested when he was not taking vitamin C? Did she pose her questions to his doctor, or to any of the other doctors whose praise of Cousins's efforts has aroused her scorn? . . .

Having stated that she does believe "positive emotions" play a role in health, Miss Ruderman then demeans the substance of her article by focusing on Cousins's choice of what may be called "the *Candid Camera* cure" as an indication of how superficial the presumed causes of the disease—and, by extrapolation, the man himself—must be. She dismisses as irrelevant the important point that Cousins used laughter to help him regain his equilibrium. If Cousins's mental fatigue had been brought about by his too closely personalizing the ills of the larger world, it certainly seems conceivable that some unsophisticated escapist humor could have provided his mind—and body—with much-needed rest. (As for the choice of *Candid Camera*, well, *de gustibus non est disputandum*.) To maintain that "there is nothing in what Cousins tells us (or what we know or can infer of the man himself) to suggest any serious emotional or intellectual strain, any stressful life circumstances" is to describe gratuitously an individual who has devoted his adult life to the pursuit of world peace. . . .

ANNE L. FINGER
Teaneck, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Florence A. Ruderman's remarks on Norman Cousins certainly make sense to me. The phenomenon of Norman Cousins has been bothering me for a long time, and I was beginning to wonder what had happened to our critical faculties. . . .

Miss Ruderman's comments on the reactions of physicians are not unreasonable, but there is more to it than she indicates. Isn't it conceivable that people feel they don't have the whole story, and that, therefore, a certain amount of tolerance is indicated, even in the face of outraged plausibility? After all, nobody wants to squelch an-

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other Galileo, although it isn't enough to fly in the face of accepted knowledge to become one—you have to be right, too. . . .

ALEXANDER L. NUSSBAUM
Boston Biomedical Research Institute
Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Florence A. Ruderman needed one additional bit of information to assess Norman Cousins's *Anatomy of an Illness*—the correct diagnosis. The disease Cousins described is polymyalgia rheumatica, not ankylosing spondylitis, and it is often self-limited, lasting several months or longer. Cousins's bizarre and naive attempts at biochemical and physiological explanations are meaningless. Polymyalgia rheumatica may require cortisone-like drugs and often can be treated with bed rest and mild drugs such as aspirin.

Cousins's comment that patients should participate in their own care is commendable, but it does not follow from his argument; this recommendation, moreover, should stand on its own merit without having to be accompanied by the need to attack and embarrass medicine and physicians.

Cousins's book was reviewed in nearly every medical journal that reviews books and all the reviews came to the same lugubrious and masochistic conclusion—doctors should heed this man and "there is much to be learned here." Miss Ruderman has incisively defogged Cousins's attempt to be an amateur physician. It is incumbent on those accomplished in one field to recognize their limitations. The *New England Journal of Medicine* and the UCLA medical school will forever have the albatross of Cousins about their egregious necks.

[Dr.] RICHARD D. SMITH
[Dr.] MARVIN EPSTEIN
Walnut Creek, California

FLORENCE A. RUDERMAN writes:

I want to thank all of those who wrote to support and even to add to my analysis of the Cousins case. I am particularly grateful to the doctors whose letters have helped to make clear the quite wide dissatisfaction with medicine's role in this affair.

To Bernard Ecanow: There is no satisfactory evidence of a therapeutic role for vitamn C in the treatment of arthritic disease, or even of its symptoms, such as an elevated erythrocyte sedimentation rate. There is evidence of risks with high dosages of vitamin C. But even if these issues were in dispute, the fact would still remain that in the absence of any kind of controls in Cousins's case, he has no basis for claiming that his gradual and partial recovery—even the drop in the sedimentation rate—is due to anything he did, rather than to a natural process of remission, in a condition naturally subject to remission.

To Anne L. Finger: Miss Finger has the shoe on the wrong foot. No reader has any obligation to try, privately, to fill in the holes, or plaster over the discrepancies and evasions, in Cousins's account. It is Cousins who has made his story and his "message"—a distorted story and a pernicious message—as public as his article, his book, repeated appearances on nationwide television, and other skillful uses of the media could make them. And it is Cousins who has an intellectual—and ethical—responsibility to answer, publicly, the questions which his public story and his public claims raise.

Politics & the Novel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ruth R. Wisse's otherwise perceptive essay about American Jewish writers and their readers ["Reading About Jews," March] is misleading in its reference to Joseph Heller's *Good as Gold*. Mrs. Wisse cites the novel as a recent example of the Jewish reader's surprising failure to protest certain coarse portrayals of Jews in fiction, and she attributes this lapse to the nervous twittering of "the educated and sophisticated Jews . . . about the sanctity of art." Though it's true that some reviewers seemed to think Heller's deplorable book a work of high satiric art, and that many Jewish readers shared this view, I doubt that any lofty ideas about the sanctity of literary art can account for the generally enthusiastic reception of *Good as Gold*. Surely the reason for the novel's "success" was political, not literary. Heller's crude vilification of Henry Kissinger, employees of the United States government, and failed intellectuals was taken for brilliant satire by those readers who shared his righteous contempt for his target, and were therefore only too willing to overlook his odious Jewish characters as well as the ineptitude of his style and thought. (*Catch-22* was similarly overestimated *as art* by those readers who confuse a novelist's literary achievement with his political message.) It might even be argued that most Jewish readers were not offended by Heller's Jewish family precisely because its members were so poorly drawn and without any artistic merit. A caricature stings only when it is faithful to reality. When, as in the case of *Good as Gold*, the lampoon is consistently wide of the mark, it is as damaging as a popgun.

PEARL K. BELL
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Gershom Scholem

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As someone who is as far removed from the Kabbalah as it is possible to be, a *mitnagid* born and bred, by temperament and taste, I confess to being profoundly moved by Gershom Scholem's autobiographical essay, "How I Came to the Kabbalah" [May]. He confirms again that there may be a greater wisdom in the search than in the finding. He has not made a mystic of me, but he has, at the least, reduced my bias.

MICHAEL BLANKFORT
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I had the privilege of participating in Gershom Scholem's seminar group when he was a visiting professor at Boston University in 1975. He told us then how he came to Kabbalah and how the whole subject was ridiculed. A favorite anecdote of his concerns one of the professors at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York who, upon learning of Scholem's investigations in Kabbalah, responded: "Nonsense is nonsense. But the history of nonsense—that's a science." . . .

RUTH BIRNBAUM
Springfield, Massachusetts

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Your driving habits are probably the most important factor of all in saving fuel. The best advice we can give is to drive at moderate speeds and accelerate evenly. For example, jackrabbit starts take much more gasoline than gradual acceleration. Frequent stops will also cost you fuel, because every "pump" of the accelerator means extra gas going through the carburetor. Also, "riding the brake" creates a lot of unnecessary friction and wastes gas.

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"Peace Now" & American Jews

Ruth R. Wisse

THE time has come again to tell the story of Yankele and the rabbi of Chelm:

Once the good-hearted rabbi of Chelm was interrupted in his devotions by the sudden appearance of one of his townspeople, Yankele, bleeding and howling in pain. The *shabbes-goy** had gratuitously punched Yankele in the mouth. The rabbi asked solicitously if he could inspect the damage. But when Yankele opened his mouth, the rabbi was horrified. How does a Jew come to have such a healthy set of teeth? Are these the very teeth that Yankele had exposed to the *shabbes-goy*? Well, then, no wonder he had been brutalized. For a Jew to show such strong teeth is in itself a provocation. The rabbi counseled Yankele never to show his teeth to any Gentile again.

In subsequent weeks, although Yankele keeps his mouth dutifully shut, the *shabbes-goy* beats him up repeatedly. Each time the rabbi, after due analysis of the situation, discovers a provocation: once Yankele had carried a loaf of bread home from the marketplace, obviously attracting the *shabbes-goy*'s envy; a second time he had strayed too far out of town, obviously transgressing what the *shabbes-goy* considered to be the Jew's legitimate bounds. Finally, after still another beating, the rabbi realizes the gravity of the situation and calls a public meeting of the local Jewish elders to resolve the matter. The meeting unanimously concludes that Yankele is too dangerous to keep in town. At the rabbi's suggestion he is forced to leave, and the *shabbes-goy*'s wages are modestly raised to placate him and "move him to pity."

This bitter little parable by the Yiddish writer, I.L. Peretz, came to mind on reading the prominent advertisement of the American Friends of "Peace Now," published in a number of Jewish newspapers in mid-June and before that the subject of a "leaked" news item in the New York *Times*. The ad, a call for financial support to help "disseminate" among American Jews the ideas set forth by the sponsors, was signed by about 90 well-known American Jews. Its main thrust was to oppose the Begin government's policy of establishing further settlements in the occupied West Bank, a policy which it identified as a critical impediment to an eventual peace agreement.

The ad did not identify any impediment to peace in the Middle East other than the policies of the Begin government, so it might be useful, to begin with, to recall the immediate context of events in which it appeared.

On May 31, the fourth national conference of Al Fatah, the largest, most moderate, and most influential faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization, headed by Yasir Arafat, rededicated itself to the complete liberation of Palestine, and to the liquidation of the Zionist entity, "politically, economically, militarily, culturally, and ideologically." Rejecting all diplomatic initiatives aimed at modifying its stand, Al Fatah continued to define *all* of Israel as occupied territory, and vowed to continue its struggle "until the Zionist entity is liquidated and Palestine is liberated."

On June 13, notwithstanding their full cognizance of this position, the nine-nation European Economic Community, at a meeting of heads of state and government in Venice, called for the association of the PLO with the Middle East negotiating process. The Venice declaration deliberately touched upon all the issues that are most sensitive to Israel, including the threat to the future of Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, in the Arab world, the government of Saudi Arabia, the recipient of American F-15's and a regime held to be friendly to the aims and policies of the United States, denied reports that it was planning contact with President Sadat of Egypt. Having committed the crime of making peace with Israel, with the blessing of the United States, Sadat has been held in political isolation by his fellow Arabs ever since. Not a single Arab state, including the "moderate" Jordanians and Saudi Arabians, has breached this isolation.

This was the moment chosen by a new coalition of American Jews to find its voice and issue a call

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* A Gentile hired to perform domestic tasks forbidden to Jews on the Sabbath.

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for action—not against the genocidal intentions of the PLO, or against the cynicism of countries held in the thrall of the oil cartel, or against the implacable enmity of the Arab states, but against the government of Israel for proving a stumbling block to peace. When danger mounts, the safest thing is still to kick Yankele out of town.

THE American Friends of "Peace Now" represent themselves as a group of Jews deeply concerned with the well-being of Israel, with the ongoing manifestations of hostility to Israel, and with Israeli policies that appear to fan this hostility. Their rhetoric and demeanor are intentionally cautious. Unlike Breira, an earlier "peace-oriented" movement of American Jews which was accused of forcing Israel's hand by calling for recognition of the PLO, the American Friends define themselves as the counterpart of a home-grown Israeli movement and hence thoroughly unexceptionable in their position. The group's advertisement, a model of decorum, deserves to be quoted in its entirety.

First the preamble:

"Peace Now" is an Israeli peace movement supported by hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens. It is independent of any political party. Founded by reserve combat officers during the spring of 1978, "Peace Now" has since brought together a coalition of people with a wide range of political and religious outlooks to promote reconciliation between Israel and its neighbors.

Israeli and American Jews must not make the work of rejectionists easier by taking positions which do not benefit Israel's interests and undermine its new relations with Egypt and its long-standing relationship with the United States.

Next, the group's statement of aims, wrought as skillfully as the preamble:

"Peace Now" affirms that:

- Israeli security requires normalization of relations between Israel and its neighbors. The Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty is the essential first step toward that end. Peace secures borders better than borders can secure peace.

- Continued Israeli rule over more than a million Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza subverts the democratic and Jewish character of Israeli society.

- All further settlement of the West Bank must be stopped. Such a policy seriously impedes any eventual agreement with the Palestinians and distresses Israel's friends and allies. It suggests diplomatic priorities other than peace and security.

- The government of Israel should conduct negotiations with any Palestinian body that renounces terrorism and accepts the path of peaceful negotiations as the only way to solve the conflict with Israel. Such negotiations should confirm each side in its national right, including Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state in secure and recognized borders and the Palestinians' right to a national entity.

Anyone familiar with Jewish sensitivities will appreciate the care that has been taken in drafting this statement, especially the preamble with its attempt to establish the group's legitimacy. Despite the carefulness, however, and the apparent unexceptionability of the sentiments expressed, the statement is completely one-sided, and disingenuous in its announced concern for the "democratic and Jewish character of Israeli society." Let us start with the positions taken and work back to the position-takers.

"ISRAELI security requires normalization of relations between Israel and its neighbors." True. Israel, indeed, has always made this claim, and has sought normalization not only with its neighbors, but with its neighbors' neighbors. Thirty years elapsed before the first of those neighbors took that "essential first step," as the statement approvingly calls the Israeli-Egyptian treaty, toward peace; as of the moment no second neighbor has followed suit.

Yet despite their declared approval of the Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement, the American Friends appear to put less faith in it than do the parties themselves. Even as the Israelis, in one of the most generous peace offerings of modern history, are in the process of returning the last parts of the Sinai peninsula, here they are already being warned that their actions in the West Bank will "undermine" their new relations with Egypt. If peace, being as cozy as the American Friends claim, can "secure borders better than borders can secure peace," then why should not Egypt extend to Israel the trust that partners in peace owe to one another? Or is peace, for Egypt, no more than a stick with which to threaten renewed hostility and antagonism? If so, perhaps the American Friends should have considered a different aphorism, such as that of the dour Yankee who acknowledged that good fences make good neighbors.

There is an implied link between the first point of affirmation and the three that follow, all of which suggest that Israeli settlement of the West Bank is the critical obstacle to peace. This wistful notion underlies much of the thinking of "Peace Now" and its American friends. It is, of course, a staple of the international scene by now, a fantasy that has been translated into a political program. By muddying the waters sufficiently, Arab propaganda has put the onus of "peace" on Israel's West Bank policies, and now Jews too have leapt into the mud and are proceeding to join in the swim.

There is, however, an obvious flaw in this argu-

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ment, which rests on the assumption that a halt in West Bank settlement would produce a more forthcoming attitude among the Arabs. In fact there has been no counter-offer at all on the part of Israel's belligerent neighbors. The "rejectionists," a felicitous term that masks the political reality of Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Libya, etc., and the PLO, repudiate the state of Israel altogether, in whole and in all its parts. The rejectionists do not differentiate between "further settlement of the West Bank" (which the American Friends say "must be stopped") and any Jewish settlement whatsoever in Greater Palestine. The rejectionists did not make their peace with the Labor government that preceded Begin, when there was less settlement, nor with the smaller Israel of pre-1967 borders, when there was no settlement, nor with the teeny-tiny Israel proposed in 1947. The American Friends urge Israel not to "make the work of the rejectionists easier," but it is hard to know what, short of self-immolation on the part of Israel, would *not* make their work "easier."

The current status of Israel on the West Bank may be undesirable for both the governed and the governors, and there is no denying that "continued Israeli rule over more than a million Arabs" under present circumstances distresses both the Israelis and the resident Arabs. But in the real world, for all that, a given condition, no matter how unpalatable, must be compared with its real alternative. The present alternative of a PLO government on the West Bank is infinitely more dangerous to the "democratic and Jewish character of Israeli society" than continued Israeli rule. There are even several Arab states that think so.

The Begin policy of continuing West Bank settlement, elsewhere referred to in "Peace Now" statements as "expansionism" but here prudently watered down to "a policy [which] seriously impedes any eventual agreement with the Palestinians," is not even that. The Sinai peninsula (which many Israelis believe a Labor government would not have handed back as easily as Begin has done) boasted not only Jewish settlements but a valuable supply of oil. All this was ceded in return for a firm promise and policy of peace. There is thus on Israel's part a precedent to prove that settlements are not an impediment to peace. Had King Hussein of Jordan joined the peace talks at Camp David, the limits of Jewish habitation in Samaria and Judea might now be an issue for mutual consideration between the two countries. Since Jews have always lived in this region, and since Arabs continue to live in great numbers within Israel's pre-1967 borders, it will be natural for some Jewish settlement to continue and develop long after any peace agreements are signed. The only serious impediments to an agreement with the Palestinians are those who claim to represent the Palestinians.

In their final call upon Israel to conduct negotiations "with any Palestinian body that renounces terrorism," the American Friends have entered the field of diplomacy themselves, going considerably beyond the language of the Camp David accords which they claim to honor—and in a manner that changes and subverts the consensus position in Israel on this matter. Whereas the Camp David agreement—and President Sadat's plan for the West Bank—speak of recognizing the "legitimate rights of the Palestinians," the American Friends call upon Israel to confirm the "national right" of the Palestinians and speak of a Palestinian "national entity," hardly minor distinctions in the careful semantics of political discourse, and in fact code words for a PLO-governed Palestinian state. Moreover, the statement's seemingly bland formula that "negotiations should confirm . . . Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state in secure and recognized borders," if it is to be taken literally, masks a weakening of the position to which the United States has publicly bound itself since 1975—namely, that it will not speak to the PLO until the latter both renounces terrorism and accepts UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which *stipulate* Israel's right to exist in secure and recognized borders. For a prominent group of American Jews to proffer terms of negotiation less favorable to Israel than those accepted by the U.S. State Department and the President of Egypt would seem, to put it mildly, a serious sign of demoralization.

WHO are the American Jews who take this extraordinary position—supposedly out of a concern for "reconciliation between Israel and its neighbors"? In the preamble they identify themselves not as a group in their own right but as individuals responding to the initiative taken by "hundreds of thousands" of Israeli citizens, a "coalition of people with a wide range of political and religious outlooks." Thus the Americans are simply adding their own voices to an indigenous Israeli call for peace, which they wish to promote in an analogous fashion within the American Jewish community and before the American public at large.

Unfortunately, the implied relation between the two groups is either inadvertently or deliberately misleading. When the Israeli peace movement puts pressure on the Begin government and singles out current policy on the West Bank and Gaza as Israel's contribution to the stalemate in the Middle East, it is acting in an accepted and reasonable way within the democratic process of that country. The Israelis must judge and inform their leadership, and make their grievances known. One may agree or disagree with the tactics and policies of Israel's peace movement, but its moral and political justification is self-evident. Citizens of a democracy are expected to share the responsibilities of government by fighting for the best leaders and the soundest policies they deem possible.

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But American Jews are not Israelis, and the government they seek to influence is not Israel's but their own. Political actions must be assessed not only for their avowed intentions but also in the light of their actual and foreseeable results. While American Jews may differentiate between the Begin policies and the state of Israel as such, they should be intelligent enough to realize that the rest of the world does not usually make such distinctions, and may knowingly exploit opposition to a specific policy for the purposes of justifying a much broader attack on the very legitimacy of basic Israeli security needs. The current American Jewish battle against the Begin government provides an incentive for American and European policies unfavorable to Israel, and creates a strong disincentive for the Arabs to develop any more conciliatory approaches to basic issues.

Actually, the United States could be called upon to apply pressure to any number of the "heavies" in the Middle East drama, some of them longstanding and quite outspoken enemies of peace, and far more dangerous to the cause of reconciliation than ever the government of Israel was or is. It is odd, for example, that the politically conscious Jews who signed the advertisement of the American Friends of "Peace Now" addressed no calls for negotiation to King Hussein when he recently visited Washington. Here is an autocratic ruler, whose claim to the land he governs goes back no further than 1921 (four years *after* the Balfour Declaration), who launched his own war against Israel in 1967 with the hope of assisting in that country's destruction, and who, despite entreaties from all the interested parties, has refused to enter into peace talks either under the Camp David auspices or since. The American Friends, in a bid to introduce some equilibrium into Middle East affairs, might have used Hussein's visit to call for a grass-roots peace movement among Jordanians that would nudge their monarch to the bargaining table. Instead, by singling out the current elected government of Israel as the object of their concern, the American Friends of "Peace Now" exercise the right of free speech to help tip further the weight of public opinion and political action against Israel, while hiding behind the "cover" of an indigenous Israeli movement.

The second claim to legitimacy advanced by the American Friends is that it, like the "Peace Now" movement of Israel, is "independent of any political party." The list of American signatories tries to strike the same note of general consensus and coalition that is claimed for the Israeli counterpart. There are Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist Jews (though not, to my knowledge, any Orthodox). There are affiliated Jews, executive directors of Jewish organizations, and marginal friends of Israel (the inclusion of Arthur Miller and Diana Trilling is a triumph of balance in itself). There are many academics and not too many holdovers from previous unpopular Jewish causes. And if there are prominent non-Zionists in the leadership of the group, they have also managed to bring in under their umbrella people like Marie Syrkin, with solid Zionist credentials.

But the implied analogy between the "wide coalition" in Israel and America is once again misleading. The Israel peace movement emerged spontaneously out of the bitterness and frustration that followed the Yom Kippur war. Vowing to remain free of politics, it gave vent to the anger Israelis felt toward their leaders who had misjudged the enemy before the war, and seemed to be doing no better in its wake. The Israelis, who have lived in a garrison state for over three decades, who serve in their armed forces until their mid-fifties, when Americans are beginning their early retirement, and who see no end to the struggle for recognition they have been waging as long as most of them can remember, feel undeniably, and understandably, cheated. It is not their protest that is surprising, but its mildness. The defiant postures of the Gush Emunim are another expression of that same grim protest.

As for the American Friends, despite the studied diversity of the ninety signatories, this is neither a spontaneous movement nor representative of Jewish grass-roots emotion. A small nucleus, all of them, I believe, academics, and all with a longstanding commitment to a liberal-Left point of view, designed this "Call for Support" and garnered the appropriate signatures, not to express the public sentiment of Jews but, by their own admission, to formulate it. Rather than giving voice to the dissatisfaction of American Jews with the Begin government, they are worried that there is not enough dissatisfaction, and are trying to provoke it through the dissemination of "educational materials, advertisements, symposia, and debates." They placed their ad in Jewish publications so as to maintain the fiction of speaking within the community, but took care first to leak their story to the heavyweight press that would spread the message more widely. So eager was the New York *Times* to report on "Jews Disputing Begin Line" that it ran its summary of the ad, with a complete list of signatures, before the *Jewish Week* and other Jewish publications had even reached their subscribers.

The American Friends, by openly "disputing the Begin line" in an election year, hope to persuade American Jews and Americans in general to dissociate themselves from the policies of Israel's elected government and to force Begin from office. This manipulative activity gives the lie to the group's expressed concern for the democratic character of Israeli society. Representatives of "Peace Now" have been coming to America—and if the solicited funds are forthcoming will continue to be brought to America—to speak against the policy

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of the elected government of a democratic country. But the Israeli public is composed not only of "Peace Now" supporters but of a majority of non-supporters, including "hundreds of thousands" of Jewish refugees from Arab countries who are somewhat less sanguine about the prospective merits of PLO control of the West Bank. Frustrated by the slow process of convincing their own electorate, the representatives of "Peace Now" have turned to America where the climate is ripe for a concerted anti-Begin assault, and where there are local Jews itching to help in the effort. The purpose of this joint Israeli-American maneuver is to do from outside the country what cannot be done as quickly within, by increasing American pressure on a very wobbly government. Whatever ideal motivates this group, it is certainly not faith in "the democratic character of Israeli society."

ONE of the myths perpetrated by critics of Israel in recent years is that of a docile, monolithic American Jewish community, falling in behind an official Israeli party line like so many goslings behind their mother goose. In contrast to this image of blind obedience, the critics present themselves as daring voices of dissent, braving the hostility of the organized Jewish community to register their independent views. They must speak out publicly, they say, because of their great concern for Israel's safety which takes precedence over communal solidarity and chauvinistic self-congratulation.

The truth of the matter is actually the reverse. The American Jewish communities—for no two are alike—are ridden with factionalism and dissension on every conceivable point. The issue of American support for Soviet Jews is debated with bloody intensity and great moral anguish. The degree of communal support for Jewish education is a growing subject of controversy between supporters of the American public-school ideal and defenders of the day school as the only reliable source of Jewish identity. Jews argue about the value of their participation in Jewish affairs as opposed to applying their energies to the improvement of the community at large. In some cities, like Seattle and Montreal, antagonisms flare between Sephardim and Ashkenazim. In others, the battles among Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox interests are being fought with old-country relish.

On the matter of Israel there is also much divisiveness—contrary to the impression of monolithic consensus about which one hears so much. Rising inflation and unemployment in the United States have forced a painful reconsideration of the financial commitments of American Jews to Israeli causes, and some of the bitterest fights on the Jewish agenda concern the balance between "Israel" and "local needs." Within Zionist circles the old rivalries between the Right and the Left have been complicated by newer rivalries between the "secular" and the "religious" and even between the old and the young. If factionalism is an index of vitality, most American Jewish communities are thriving.

But there is one area in which the Jewish communities have—at least until now—shown exceptional discipline. Since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, American Jews have recognized a certain change in their status, requiring an adjustment of their normal habits and responses. Though they remain in the Diaspora, the presence in the world of a Jewish state means a reentry of Jews into the arena of international politics, an arena from which Jews as a sovereign people had been excluded for millennia. A country cannot wander from place to place, making necessary adjustments and currying the favor of successive rulers, but must stand in physical defense of itself, alongside its neighbors when possible, against its neighbors if need be. A country must have one central government, empowered to act for all the people it represents in all public areas of life. The Jews who choose to remain in the Diaspora are free to function in their own lands as they wish and as they can, but in assisting, supporting, and caring for the survival and security of Israel, they have to follow the guidelines of the elected government of the state, which has been entrusted with the powers of rule.

This respect for Israeli sovereignty has been an unusual phenomenon, requiring as it does sustained restraint and self-discipline on the part of a fragmented and fractious people. Despite the mistakes of successive cabinets of Israeli leaders, mistakes which have seemed—especially to Jewish businessmen—as numerous as the stars in the firmament, American Jews have continued to support Israel along the lines that its government set out. They swallowed the disappointment of Menachem Begin's election to power, recognizing that if Begin was not their own favored candidate, and not the one likely to come off best on *Meet the Press*, the Israeli people had a right to make their own choices and even, if necessary, their own blunders.

What has distinguished American Jewry above and beyond this has been its willingness to dissent on Israel's behalf from the prevailing wisdom of the media, and to fight the gangup of the UN and now of most of the West. American Jews opposed the Arab boycott, and continue to oppose its ubiquitous force. They resist the conventional wisdom that Israel is responsible for the problems of the Middle East. They recognize that the *blaming* of Israel falsifies history, sacrifices morality to expediency, and inverts the categories of international law.

At least so it has been until now. What we see emerging is an older style of Diaspora Jewish politics in which Jews attack one another—always in

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the name of some lofty ideal—rather than confronting the severer danger they face as a people. A growing number of American Jews are now beginning to treat the government of Israel as just another political faction to be exposed, pilloried, and defeated. The American Friends are only the most sophisticated of several groups placing opposition to "further Jewish settlement on the West Bank" at the top of their political agenda. There is also the new Committee of Americans for Peace in the Middle East, a Jewish group that brings its studied even-handedness to a dramatically uneven struggle. There is an Ad Hoc Committee for Peace and Justice in the Middle East, with its base in Boston, a group that is no longer concerned with "who started it" as long as the cycle of violence is ended, once and for all, and presumably on any terms. A further group of fifty-six Jews, orchestrated by Leonard Fein, the editor of *Moment* magazine, and duly publicized on the front page of the New York *Times,* has actually issued an open "vote of no-confidence" in the present government of Israel because the Prime Minister has not been receptive to their criticisms in private conversation. If the duties of Israeli citizenship are too arduous for these American Jews to assume, they do not seem to be above arrogating to themselves all the privileges of citizenship—if not, indeed, of veto power—by casting a vote of no-confidence when they have never even won the right to vote.

Jews have often tried to reinvent their enemy in a more palatable image. They write out his conditions of acceptance for him, and then try to satisfy their idea of his expectations. They have not had much success with this strategy in this century. Nevertheless, they have not abandoned it.

Peretz's little satire about Yankele and the *shabbes-goy* was directed against the Jewish socialists and other idealists of his day who tried to justify the pogroms against the Jews by eliminating the Jewish "provocations," and to find the causes of anti-Semitism in the Jew so that they would not have to come to his defense. Israel has rescued Jews from the political condition of statelessness, but apparently not from its psychological handicaps. As Peretz wrote, there's a little of the rabbi of Chelm in each of us.

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Czechoslovakia 1938–Israel 1980

Steven Plaut

Whereas the Sudetenland issue is the heart of the Middle European conflict;

Whereas Czechoslovakia has refused to recognize the legitimate rights of the Sudeten people or meet the demands of its representatives;

Therefore the Council of European Communities:

1. Calls for direct negotiations between all sides to the Sudetenland conflict, including the Sudeten German party, which is the sole representative of the Sudeten people;

2. Recognizes the right of the Sudeten people to national self-determination, including the right to national sovereignty;

3. Declares that any attempt at settlement of the Sudeten conflict that is not based on these principles is doomed to failure.

THE above declaration is fictional. Yet it is a fair paraphrase of the position of the European democracies during the two years preceding the outbreak of World War II. Even a casual perusal of the history of European attempts at resolving the Czechoslovakian-German conflict must cause an uncanny feeling of *déjà vu*. For the current European initiative aimed at resolving the Middle East crisis and the role of the European democracies in that conflict bear an uncomfortably close similarity to their role in the negotiations over the Sudetenland in the 1930's.

In the new European commitment to Palestinian self-determination, there is a malevolent echo of the European homilies supporting Sudeten self-determination heard forty-two years ago. Israeli objections to the European move toward recognizing Palestinian self-determination are being as frivolously disregarded as were Czechoslovakian protests against the European support of Sudeten self-determination. In 1938, in the midst of negotiations over the settlement of the Sudeten conflict, the President of Czechoslovakia, Dr. Eduard Beneš, warned the West: "Do not believe it [is] a question of self-determination. From the beginning it has been a battle for the existence of the state." Several years later, after Sudeten "self-determination" was granted and Czechoslovakia had ceased to exist, Beneš—then in exile—was to observe that "such a concept of self-determination is a priori a denial of the right of self-determination of ten million Czechoslovakians and precludes the very existence of an independent Czechoslovakian state."

The European initiative to recognize Palestinian self-determination has come after thirty-two years of Israeli sovereignty. The initiative to recognize Sudeten self-determination came twenty years after the creation of Czechoslovakia. Both initiatives ignored the fact that "self-determination" already existed for the vast majority of the members of the national groups in question, in the form of German or Arab nation-states contiguous to the territories of conflict. Both initiatives disregarded the signs that demands for self-determination for one group came from those who sought the complete suppression of the self-determination of another group.

The Czechoslovakian state, like Israel, was a country recreated hundreds of years after it had been destroyed, and after centuries of foreign domination. Czechoslovakia, like Israel, lies in a strategically central location; indeed, Bismarck once observed that whoever was master of Bohemia was master of Europe (a lesson not lost on the present masters). Czechoslovakia had been an independent country until 1620, when it was conquered by Austria, and when part of its population was dispersed. Modern Czechoslovakian nationalism emerged in the second half of the 19th century, during the same period when Zionism was developing. Czechoslovakia was recreated as a result of the collapse of the Hapsburg empire, which occurred simultaneously with the fall of the Ottoman empire and its division into new states. During World War I, Czechoslovakian leaders were lobbying in European capitals for Czechoslovakian independence, at the same time that Zionist leaders were fighting for support and recognition. Czechoslovakians participated in resistance

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and espionage against the Axis powers during the war, at the same time that the Nili underground was operating in Palestine.

The Czechoslovakia that emerged after the war contained a diverse, heterogeneous population. In particular, about 23 percent of the citizens of the state were ethnic Germans, concentrated primarily in the Western section known as the Sudetenland, most of whom were vehemently opposed to incorporation into the new state. On October 21, 1918, German deputies from all parts of the former Austrian empire convened and issued a call for national "self-determination" for the Germans of Czechoslovakia, using the Wilsonian term that had recently entered the international lexicon. In the following year, there were acts of terrorism and mass demonstrations by Sudeten Germans opposed to integration into Czechoslovakia. Thousands of Sudeten Germans fled the new state into neighboring countries.

The new Czechoslovakian government, like the Israeli government of 1948, was faced with the challenge of ruling a state with a mixed population that included a large minority with questionable loyalty to the state—one that identified itself with the large populations in neighboring countries. Both states attempted to resolve their problems with the same strategy: winning over the hostile minority through economic integration, tolerance, and liberal social reform. The first President of Czechoslovakia was Tomás Garrigue Masaryk, who resembled David Ben-Gurion as a powerful, strong-willed, charismatic, and progressive politician. Masaryk, like Ben-Gurion, proposed a program of social, economic, and linguistic equality for all national groups in the state. Indeed, both men saw the integration of their respective minorities as an ultimate test of their progressive principles.

Both the Czechoslovakia of the 1920's and the Israel of the 1950's developed into stable parliamentary democracies. In both countries, a large number of parties were represented in parliament; in both, governmental coalitions of parties were formed after a great deal of partisan bargaining. Like Israeli Arabs, the Sudeten Germans voted and were elected to parliament. In both countries a pattern of decentralized government evolved, where minority groups were permitted to run their own schools in their own languages and control their own local affairs. Both countries guaranteed religious pluralism and tolerance. German was an official national language in the German areas of Czechoslovakia, just as Arabic has been an official national language in Israel. On the whole, the Sudeten Germans probably enjoyed better treatment than any other minority in Europe, just as the Arabs living under Israeli control (whether in Israel or in the occupied territories) have enjoyed tolerance without precedent for a Middle Eastern minority.

Czechoslovakia, like Israel, was ruled by social democrats committed to social reform. Both countries passed legislative programs that were among the most progressive in the world. In both countries, trade-union activism bloomed. In both countries, widespread experimentation with cooperative agriculture took place. Both countries quickly surpassed most of their neighbors in economic development and achievement,

Both the Sudeten Germans and the Palestinian Arabs found themselves at the center of international conflicts and escalating tensions. In both cases, the conflicts developed following increased radicalization of the nationalist movements in neighboring countries, where power was seized by revolutionary nationalist leaders. The Sudeten conflict was enlarged as a result of the Pan-German ideology and imperialist ambitions of the Third Reich, just as the Palestinian conflict has been the focus of Pan-Arab and Pan-Islamic movements.

For Sudeten Germans and Palestinian Arabs, peaceful coexistence gave way to increasing polarization and extremism. German complaints of discrimination and mistreatment at the hands of Czechoslovakians multiplied as international tensions grew, much as Palestinian protests spread decades later. In both cases, there occurred a shift in voting patterns as frustrations peaked. During the first decade of Czechoslovakian independence, Sudeten Germans voted primarily for the more moderate parties. In the 1930's Sudeten voters shifted to nationalist parties with totalitarian ideologies, in particular the Sudeten German party (SdP), a Nazi surrogate. The SdP received more than 60 percent of the German vote in 1935 (more than the Nazis received in Germany), and more than 85 percent in 1938. In a similar pattern, Arab voters in Israel have been moving away from the moderate parties, and voting for the Communist Rakah party. Support for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) among West Bank politicians has become virtually unanimous.

Neither the complaints of the Sudeten Germans nor those of the Palestinian Arabs were entirely without foundation. In both cases, the minority group was underrepresented in the civil service and the army, partly because of security factors. Both groups experienced security-related restrictions, particularly during periods of tension. In both cases, the issue of land ownership was one of extreme political sensitivity. Land owned by Sudeten Germans was expropriated for defense fortifications, as was Arab land in Israel. When Czechoslovakia was created, the Germans owned a disproportionate share of the land in the country, as did Israeli Arabs in 1948. In both countries, policies of land nationalization and redistribution served to inflame political passions. When tensions

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grew, every land purchase assumed a political character and could trigger violent demonstrations. Both the Third Reich and the Arab states used the land issue to rationalize their own acts of aggression.

The growing Sudeten nationalist movement was anti-liberal, anti-Western, anti-democratic, and authoritarian, like the Palestinian movement of today. The SdP, like the PLO, never outlined a political or social program beyond demanding "self-determination." Both organizations used violence to suppress other competing nationalist parties, and each asserted its own position as sole spokesman for the people in question. The SdP organized Sudeten refugees who had fled to Germany after Czechoslovakia was created. These were recruited into the Sudeten German *Heimatbund*. Later, this group formed the basis of the Sudeten German *Freikorps*, a guerrilla organization of 34,000 Sudetens living in Germany, who were to raid Czechoslovakian border areas and perform acts of terrorism until after Munich.

The Nazi party was formally banned in Czechoslovakia and the PLO was banned in Israel. Yet freedom of the press was scrupulously maintained in both countries, even in the face of provocative agitation in the minority press, in some cases in support of neighboring belligerent countries and often attacking the very existence of the state itself.

After coming to power, Hitler turned the issue of Sudeten national rights into an instrument for his expansionist aims. His interest in "self-determination" was based entirely on the intention of destroying and annexing Czechoslovakia. The Nazi propaganda machine shifted into high gear, alleging widespread violations of the human rights of Germans by the Czechoslovakian authorities. Nazi funds flowed into the coffers of the SdP. Germany ominously warned of the existence of imaginary Soviet airfields in Czechoslovakia, just as the Arabs were to "discover" American airfields in Israel. Germany labeled Czechoslovakia "a puppet of Soviet imperialism" (the Arabs accused Israel of being a puppet of Western and especially American imperialism). In particular, Germany denounced the torture and physical abuse of Sudeten Germans at the hands of Czechoslovakia.

By the summer of 1937, Hitler was simultaneously pressuring Prague to make concessions on the Sudeten issue and completing his military plans for the invasion of Czechoslovakia. The head of the SdP, Konrad Henlein, went on a diplomatic offensive, touring the Western capitals. Henlein at first attempted to convince the European governments that his ambitions were limited to autonomy for the Sudeten Germans. Yet his statements at home became increasingly belligerent. On January 1, 1938, Henlein said: "The Czechoslovakian people must recognize that no settlement will ever be reached with our great neighbor, Germany, until the Sudeten Germans are satisfied." In 1938, the SdP adopted the Carlsbad Eight Points. This manifesto, somewhat more moderate than the Palestinian National Covenant, essentially called for the partitioning of Czechoslovakia, and the secession of the Sudetenland. Unlike the PLO Covenant, it appeared to leave open the possibility of coexistence with a truncated Czechoslovakian state.

An internal problem assumed international dimensions. Responding to Nazi protests, the Western powers began pressuring Prague to accede to Sudeten demands. As early as July 1936, Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, urged Czechoslovakia to grant the Sudeten Germans full autonomy. Henlein visited London a number of times and received official welcomes of a kind usually reserved for heads of state, much like the European receptions Yasir Arafat was to enjoy decades later. The Czechoslovakian historian, Radomír Luza, contrasted these with the London reception for Czechoslovakian President Beneš who was treated "more cavalierly than if he had been the chief of a tribe in Africa."

Following the Austrian *Anschluss*, mass support for the SdP among the Sudeten Germans grew, along with violence and demonstrations against Czechoslovakia. Henlein escalated the war of rhetoric, denouncing the Prague regime as "Hussite-Bolshevik criminals" (which might be compared with current Arab denunciations of "Zionist-imperialist criminals"). Threats from the Third Reich assumed a more ominous tone. Reports arrived of German troop concentrations near the Czechoslovakian frontier. Germany attacked the Czechoslovakians as "the real disturbers of peace in Europe" while the Reich prepared for war.

Responding to Western pressure, the Czechoslovakian leaders agreed to negotiate with the SdP, and proposed their own plan for limited autonomy. The SdP, under orders from Hitler, rejected the plan peremptorily. London pressured Prague to agree to a plebiscite, even though it was clear that this would lead to a partition of Czechoslovakia.

Against the mood of appeasement, a few protests were voiced, but generally ignored. William Strang, head of the Central European Department of the British Foreign Office, warned: "Even if there were not a single German in Czechoslovakia, the root problem of German-Czechoslovakian relations would remain, viz., a Slav state thrust into the heart of Germany. . . . The German government . . . [is] using the Sudeten German question as an instrument of policy to strengthen [its] political and military position."

From the beginning, Czechoslovakia had argued that the issue of "Sudeten self-determination" was a red herring. The real cause of the Central Euro-

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pean crisis was the aggressive ambitions of the Third Reich. Yet the democracies continued to view the conflict as a question of minority rights and self-determination. Britain and Germany held talks and issued a joint statement affirming the rights of the Sudeten Germans, with no mention of the security needs of Czechoslovakia.

In 1938, London demanded and Prague was forced to accept a British mediator, even though Czechoslovakia had always maintained that the Sudeten problem was an internal affair. London appointed Lord Walter Runciman, who was himself sympathetic to the Germans. In his report to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, Runciman recommended that all agitation against the Nazis be forbidden inside Czechoslovakia. He added: "Czechoslovakian rule in the Sudeten areas for the last twenty years, though not actively oppressive, . . . has been marked by tactlessness, lack of understanding, petty intolerance, and discrimination, to a point where the resentment of the German population was inevitably moving in the direction of revolt."

During the negotiations, Czechoslovakia was forced to accede to demand after demand by the Germans. Under Western pressure, Prague agreed that the Carlsbad Eight Points would form the basis for negotiation. After each concession, new demands were raised by the SdP, which was under orders from Berlin not to reach any real agreement. German strategy called for negotiations to fail, so that the Reich would be forced to intervene. Henlein was instructed that in the unlikely event of complete capitulation by Prague to the Carlsbad program, new demands were to be added that in effect infringed on the ability of Czechoslovakia to conduct its own foreign policy. (Years later, numerous Arab politicians were to condition any settlement with Israel on its agreeing to relinquish sovereignty over its immigration policy, in addition to all other concessions.)

As tensions mounted along the borders, Czechoslovakia went on a military alert. Like the Israel Defense Forces, the Czechoslovakian military was largely based on a system of emergency reserve mobilization. As the reserves were called up, Western pressure was exerted on Czechoslovakia to demobilize, so as not to provoke Berlin. Prague persisted. Most of the Sudeten reservists failed to report. During the mobilization, two German citizens were killed by Czechoslovakian guards, and Hitler raged.

Eventually, Czechoslovakia agreed to a settlement that was essentially a complete capitulation to the Carlsbad program. On September 13, 1938, before the SdP could formally respond, a revolt broke out in the Sudetenland. Organized by the SdP, the rioters attacked Jews, Czechoslovakians, and democrats, and shot a number of policemen. The Czechoslovakian army restored order and established martial law, as the SdP leadership fled to Germany. Pressure increased on Czechoslovakia and the Sudeten Germans sensed victory. On September 19, Britain and France proposed to transfer to Germany all parts of Czechoslovakia where the population was more than half German. In exchange they offered Czechoslovakia an international guarantee for the new boundaries. In fact no such guarantee was ever received. It should be noted that the Western democracies had previously pledged to defend Czechoslovakian sovereignty over its *entire* territory.

On September 29, 1938, the leaders of Europe met in Munich and sealed the fate of Czechoslovakia. There were no Czechoslovakian representatives present. On October 1, the German Wehrmacht entered the Sudetenland. Parts of Czechoslovakia were also awarded to Poland and Hungary. Most of the Czechoslovakian defense fortifications were in the territories ceded.

The Germans immediately instituted their program of *Gleichschaltung*, suppressing the Czech and Slovak languages, confiscating Czechoslovakian property, and forcing Czechoslovakians—three quarters of a million of whom had remained in the territory ceded—to emigrate. At the same time, German propaganda continued to clamor against the denial of the national and human rights of the Germans in the remaining parts of Czechoslovakia. Germany demanded recognition of their right to self-determination as well. On March 12, 1939, there were German demonstrations in all the Czechoslovakian cities with a German population. On March 15, the German army completed the destruction of Czechoslovakia, and the Sudeten people were at last "liberated." Not a single country lifted a finger.

The Czech historian Luza has observed: "*The Sudeten German problem was not a cause of the conflict but its pretext.* The true reason, according to the Germans themselves, was a refusal of the Czechoslovakian state to become a German vassal" (emphasis in original). Hitler confirmed this view on January 23, 1942 when he said: "To put it briefly, the Czechoslovakians are a foreign body in the midst of the German community. There is no room both for them and for us. One of us must give way."

The Arab countries have always made it clear that a withdrawal by Israel to its 1967 boundaries and the creation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank would be preconditions for the recognition of the "legitimate rights of the Palestinians," rather than a complete fulfillment thereof. Just as Germany continued to demand further concessions from Prague for the Germans in the vulnerable Czechoslovakia that remained after Munich (all the while repressing the Czechoslovakians in its own territories), so once a Palestinian state came into being the Arabs would undoubtedly discover

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the need for self-determination for the Galilean Arabs, the Negev Arabs, etc. No doubt there would soon be a Galilee Liberation Organization formed.

The Arab opposition to Israel has never been based on concern for minority rights, as their own treatment of minorities demonstrates. The Arabs have been quite explicit about their view that Israel is an outsider violating their *Lebensraum*. Just as Hitler demanded that Czechoslovakia be Germanized, so the Arabs have in mind a similar program of Arabization, forced emigration, suppression, and worse for the Jews in the "democratic secular state" they aim to establish in the whole of Palestine after the first stage of Palestinian self-determination has been achieved.

There are, of course, many important differences between the campaign for Palestinian self-determination today and that for Sudeten self-determination in the 30's. Unlike Nazi Germany, the Arab countries have never pretended that the relinquishing of territories by Israel would satisfy their demands. The Western democracies have never signed mutual defense treaties with Israel as they did with Czechoslovakia. But perhaps most important, Czechoslovakia was not able to defend itself militarily. Had Czechoslovakia counterattacked in 1938, as Israel did in 1967 and 1973, defeated Germany, and seized German territory to be held until a final peace agreement, all of subsequent human history would have followed a different path.

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How to Pay For Survival

Herbert Stein

A reluctance to face the full magnitude of our task and overcome it is a coward's part. Yet the nation is not in this mood and only asks to be told what is necessary.

—J.M. Keynes
"How to Pay for the War," February 1940

A RECENT Washington *Post* story bore the headline "5-Year Military Build-Up to Cost U.S. $1 Trillion." The headline and the text were clearly meant to suggest that a trillion dollars is a lot of money, although the reporter was fair enough to say that the expenditure "will not make the United States the undisputed No. 1 in global military might." But in the period under consideration in the article (1981 through 1985) the trillion dollars would be only a little over 6 percent of the total value of U.S. output.

The basic fact is that we start from a low level of expenditures for defense—relative to the size of the U.S. economy. Even a fairly rapid increase in this low level of spending will still leave the total small—again, relative to the size of the U.S. economy. In 1979 we devoted about 5 percent of the U.S. national output to defense. That was, to provide some standard of comparison, about 25 percent more than consumers spent for furniture and household equipment in that year. If the 1979 level of defense spending were to increase by 10 percent per annum in real terms for four years, and total output rose by 2½ percent per annum—not an unreasonable rate of output growth—defense spending in 1983 would be still only about 6.6 percent of GNP.

Perhaps it is as unconvincing to rely on the intuitive notion that 5 percent or 6.6 percent of GNP are small numbers as it is to rely on the notion that one trillion dollars is a large number. A better idea of what is implied by such numbers may be obtained by considering the output that would be available for non-defense purposes—for personal consumption, for private investment, and for the non-defense programs of government—with defense programs of various sizes. I will compare possible programs. One is the Carter budget of March 1980, which calls for an annual average increase of 3.4 percent in real defense outlays from 1979 to 1983. A second, which I call "medium," would involve average annual increases of about 10 percent. This is, by my rough calculations, the rate of increase implied in the defense program suggested in May by the Committee on the Present Danger, and the rate of increase that (according to newspaper reports) Governor Reagan's defense advisers are considering. A third program, which would raise real defense outlays by 15 percent per annum, I call "high," although it would certainly be far from exhausting the economic capabilities of this country. This third program would raise defense outlays as a percent of GNP to about 8 percent in 1983, which would be midway between our recent ratio of 5 percent and the 10 to 11 percent ratio of the Eisenhower years. We did not consider ourselves "poor" in the Eisenhower period. Indeed, some social critics of the time thought we were suffering from excessive affluence. In retrospect it seems a time in which the economy performed well. In comparison with our recent performance, the inflation was negligible and growth was vigorous.

The table below compares the state of the economy in 1983 under each of my three hypothetical defense programs with the condition in 1979 and in 1958. I assume for 1983 the GNP level projected in the President's March 1980 budget revisions.

GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT AND ITS USES
(1972 Dollars)
(Figures for GNP, Defense, and Non-Defense Are Expressed in Billions of Dollars)

Fiscal Year	*GNP*	*Defense*	*Non-Defense*	*Non-Defense per Capita*
1958	$673	$74	$599	$3454
1979	1428	69	1359	6174
1983				
Carter Defense	1570	79	1491	6548
Medium Defense	1570	101	1469	6452
High Defense	1570	121	1449	6364

Clearly, with any of the defense programs considered here, output available for non-defense

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purposes per capita will be enormously greater in 1983 than it was twenty-five years earlier—90 percent higher with the Carter defense program and 84 percent higher with the "high" defense program. In this perspective, the difference between the effects of the two programs on the non-defense economy is trivial. The difference of per-capita non-defense output in 1983 between the "high" and the "low" defense program would be about 3 percent. That is, a 53 percent larger defense program would cost a 3 percent reduction in per-capita non-defense output. This is less than the loss of per-capita output which has been caused by environmental, health, and safety regulations in the last seven years. With any of the defense programs, per-capita non-defense output will be higher in 1983 than it was in 1979. In general, even with the largest of these defense programs we would be economically better off in 1983 than in 1929, twice as well off as in the Eisenhower years, and three times as well off as in 1944 when we were defending the country against Hitler.

WHAT then is the problem? Why should there have been a great struggle this spring in the Congress, and between the President and the Congress, about a proposal to spend a few additional billions of dollars, one- or two-tenths of 1 percent of GNP, for defense? Part of the opposition came from people who believed that increased defense spending would endanger our national security by provoking the Russians. Some, like the President, thought that more money would weaken the national defenses, presumably because the Pentagon did not have enough wit to spend more money in a useful way. But the main problem was that people who believed that more defense spending would be useful could not agree on who should pay for it, or how. Some were for more defense but not if it was to be financed "on the backs of the poor," as they would say, meaning not if it was to be financed by cutting "social" programs of government. Some were for more defense but not if it was to be financed by an increase of taxes. And, at least in the political and economic circumstances of the spring of 1980, no one wanted to finance more defense spending with a budget deficit. Given these conditions on which people could agree on an increase of defense spending, only a tiny increase was possible.

Those who held these positions did not believe, or would not have said, that they were subordinating national security to some other objective. They would have said, and probably believed, that the other objective was also essential to the national security. That is, the national security could not be defended if the disadvantaged part of the population were alienated by the inadequacy of social programs. Or the national security could not be defended if the nation's economic base were undermined by high taxation. Or the national security could not be defended if the country were racked by inflation as a result of budget deficits.

This all means that we have an allocation problem which is politically acute and may be serious in its economic implications also. In the aggregate, even the largest of the defense programs considered here does not require any great sacrifice from the American people. But there will be *some* sacrifice, in the sense that there will be less output available for non-defense purposes than if the defense program had been smaller. The problem is to find the best way to allocate that sacrifice. Or, if there is no "best" way, as there probably is not, we must find a way to allocate the sacrifice that we can agree upon as preferable to not defending ourselves adequately.

Operationally, these allocation issues come into focus in the federal budget. Thinking about the budget problem has to start with the fact that the total Carter expenditure estimates—defense plus non-defense—for 1983 would take a larger share of the estimated GNP for that year than we are now paying in taxes. In other words, if we continue to pay only that share of the GNP in taxes, we will not be paying for his defense programs, let alone for any higher ones.

There are four ways to finance such defense programs: cutting non-defense spending below the Carter projections, raising the tax ratio above the present level, running a budget deficit, and raising the real gross national product above the level assumed in the Carter budget projections. Each is possible. None is easy, or free of problems. I shall consider each in turn.

Cutting Non-Defense Expenditures. We are so used to the idea of extravagance and excess in the non-defense budget that it may come as a surprise to be told that the Carter estimates of non-defense spending for 1983 are low. But that is the usual condition. Estimates for a year three years into the future usually show little increase, but when that year is reached the actual expenditures far exceed the estimate made three years earlier. I start here, however, with the official estimate of expenditures for 1983, not with a realistic estimate of what expenditures will be if we pursue politics as usual for the next three years. To hold actual expenditures to the official estimates will require a great effort. I am concerned here with the possibility of cutting *below* the official estimate.

From 1958 to 1979 real non-defense expenditures increased at an average rate of 5.5 percent a year. The projection for 1983 implies an average annual increase of 1.8 percent. There are two ways to look at that. On the one hand, after twenty-one years of such rapid increases we ought to be able to afford a few years of little or no growth in this area. On the other hand, there is a strong trend of rapid increase which will be difficult to arrest. There is something to both these points. During the easy years, when inflation was raising the

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revenue rapidly, when defense spending was declining, and when we were still impressed with the ability of the government to cure poverty, injustice, pollution, and all other ills by spending money, programs were added which had little or no payoff. But also during this period things were going on, like the aging of the population and the increase of the public debt, which made some increases of expenditures inevitable and irreversible.

A large part of the increase in government expenditures in recent years has been the increase in transfer payments to individuals—payments for which no service in return is expected. Such payments (by all governments, federal, state, and local) rose from 8.5 percent of GNP in 1972 to 10.2 percent in 1979. This has led to suggestions that returning the ratio to its former level would provide funds to finance most or all of the needed increase in defense spending. However, such a shift is much more difficult than it seems. In 1979, 83 percent of those transfer payments were for social-insurance benefits (for which the beneficiaries had made prior payments), for military retirement pensions, and for veterans' benefits. The remainder, mainly direct relief and food stamps, was only 1.1 percent of GNP in 1979, down from 1.2 percent in 1972.

Still, it would be a mistake to say that the non-defense expenditures cannot be cut below the level projected in the Carter budget, or that cuts would have to come out of the hides of the poor. Several categories of expenditures are most eligible for reduction:

1. The part of programs nominally addressed to the poor but which is spent on middle-income people including parts of the food-stamp, education-assistance, school-lunch, and housing programs.

2. Programs nominally addressed to the poor which don't work, like employment and training programs.

3. Industrial interventions which have no rationale as anti-poverty programs, such as agriculture assistance and regulation and "promotion" of the energy industry.

4. Grants to state and local governments for purposes which could be better financed at the state or local level.

The larger the cuts sought the more difficult they will be to achieve, not only because the political resistance will be greater but also because the real costs per billion dollars of cut are getting larger. These costs have to be compared, in a judgmental way, with the costs of raising taxes or running deficits. But I would suggest that a cut of non-defense expenditures by 1 percent of GNP below the Carter projections for 1983 is feasible in the sense that it is not ruled out by existing legal or moral commitments. That would be a cut of about 6 percent from the level projected by the Carter administration, and of about 16 percent from the more "cuttable" part of that projection, which is the part left after excluding social insurance, veterans' benefits, and interest. The feasibility of this much of a cut is indicated by the estimates made in President Ford's last budget, issued in 1977, and by a study done earlier this year by the Congressional Budget Office, which canvassed the possibilities for reducing expenditures without radical changes of policy.

Increasing Taxes. Cutting non-defense expenditures by 1 percent of GNP would permit balancing the budget without any increase in the overall tax burden above its present level if we stick to the Carter defense program. But present taxes would not be sufficient to pay for the medium defense program, let alone the high one.

The idea that we should raise taxes to pay for the defense program will strike some people as politically impossible. We haven't had a general revenue-raising tax bill in peacetime in about forty-five years. But, of course, we are raising taxes all the time, every day. We do it by inflation which, without any law being passed, raises the ratio of revenues to incomes by pushing people into higher tax brackets.

In fact, if we do nothing, leaving the tax laws just as they are, the ratio of federal revenues to GNP will rise from 20.7 percent this year to 22.8 percent in 1983. That will result partly from the new windfall-profits tax and the social-security tax increases already enacted. But it will result also in large part from the 28 percent increase in the price level which Carter's budget assumes will occur between 1980 and 1983.

This built-in tax increase would finance the medium defense budget plus Carter's projected non-defense expenditures for 1983. It would come close to financing the high defense budget with a cut of non-defense spending equal to 1 percent of GNP.

So it is not difficult to raise enough taxes to finance an enlarged defense program. The problem is that the tax system which would result from keeping the rates we have while the inflationary process runs would be an unsatisfactory one. In fact, the inflation of the past ten years has already substantially distorted the federal tax system. It has subjected a large number of middle-income people to much higher marginal rates of income tax than they have been used to paying. It has especially increased the tax burden on income from business investment, primarily because businesses cannot charge off the true cost of replacing capital used in production when they calculate income subject to tax.

For years many people have been looking forward to the opportunity to reduce the overall tax burden—the ratio of taxes to GNP—as a way of correcting these distortions accumulated during the inflation. To continue the present tax rates while the inflation runs would not only preserve

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the existing evils but also add new ones. And then there is the possibility that the inflation may be reduced below the rate projected by the administration, in which case all the projected revenue would not be available.

There are, however, ways to revise the tax structure that would preserve the revenue yield while correcting features of the system that are the subject of most complaint. This would involve reducing the present highest rates of individual income tax and relieving the burden on business investment in any one of a number of ways. The corporate-profits tax rate could be reduced, dividends could be relieved, in whole or part, from taxation at the corporation or individual level, or more ample provision could be made for depreciation. The revenue loss from these reductions could be recouped by increasing taxes on consumption. One way to do this which is attractive at the present time because of its beneficial effects in reducing oil imports would be a high tax on gasoline, or on oil products in general. This could be properly described as a "Defense Tax" because of its contribution to reducing our vulnerability to disruption of oil supplies. Other possibilities are a value-added tax or a progressive tax on consumption administered through the income tax. In any of these cases provision could be made for relieving the very poor from the added tax burden.

Of course, the tax revision suggested here will not be attractive politically. It will be easily described as transferring burdens from the rich to the poor, even though its long-term effect may be beneficial to the poor. Not the defense burden alone but that burden combined with political power and prejudice may keep us from having a tax system that is favorable to economic growth.

It may be realistic to suppose that such a revision of the tax system is not possible, and that a tax program to finance higher defense expenditures will have to be pretty much like the present one but further distorted by inflation. This would not mean that financing the higher defense program is impossible, or not worthwhile. Its chief economic significance would be that during the period of the defense build-up the rate of business investment would be smaller than would be optimum, and the future level of total output would also be smaller. The magnitudes involved in a short period are not frightening, however. At an improbable extreme one might assume that the budget was so financed that the entire difference between the low defense program and the high defense program came out of private investment. How much difference that would make for the total level of output in 1983 would be a subject of considerable disagreement among economists. But the difference is unlikely to be more than 2 percent of GNP and more likely to be around 1 percent. In a longer period this difference would become larger. The need to reform the tax structure would be greater if the defense program were to continue rising relative to GNP for a long time. But our need may be for a spurt in defense spending for a period of four or five years, while we make good certain deficiencies in our forces, after which spending would decline as a fraction of GNP. In that case, reform of the tax structure, while desirable, would not be imperative because we could look forward to tax reduction later. Anyway, even for a longer period, tax reform would not be the necessary condition for our security.

This is an appropriate point at which to comment on the proposition that a strong economy is essential to national security. The proposition is true if we are not too fussy about what "strong" means, and it is relevant in some circumstances. But it is not relevant as implying any limits to U.S. defense policy or U.S. economic policy today. The total output of the U.S. economy is about twice that of the USSR. The output of the industrial democracies is four or five times that of the USSR. It is not because the West is economically weak that it is militarily vulnerable today. A difference of 1 or 2 percent in U.S. GNP in 1983, or even 5 or 10 percent in 1990, will not significantly affect our national security. What will be important, and what has been lacking, is will and wisdom in using the resources that our economy makes available.

Running a Deficit. The foregoing discussion has assumed that increased defense spending has to be financed within a balanced budget. This may seem a bizarre assumption. The federal budget has been balanced in only one year of the past twenty. Why should we suddenly become so finicky about balancing the budget when our defense expenditures may be rising rapidly?

The conventional answer is that deficits cause inflation, which has many adverse consequences, including bad effects on total output, without any offsetting benefits. But the connection between deficits and inflation is loose and probably not necessary. Even a deficit equal to several percent of GNP will not be inflationary unless it is financed in an inflationary way, by excessive increase in the supply of money. Whether in fact deficits in the past have caused excessive monetary expansion is in dispute among students of the subject, but there is little doubt that a determined monetary authority could avoid an inflationary monetary increase. It is probably prudent not to put too much strain on the determination of our monetary authority, the Federal Reserve, by running a very large deficit, but a deficit of 2 or 3 percent of GNP is unlikely to exceed our ability to avoid inflation.

The consequence of a deficit which is more serious because it cannot be avoided is the absorption of savings into financing it. The larger the deficit the smaller will be the fraction of

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savings available to finance private investment and the slower the rate of economic growth will be. This general proposition will not hold in recessions, when demand is temporarily inadequate, but we cannot count on carrying on a defense program only in recessions.

Thus, the objection to financing the defense program with a deficit is much like the objection to financing it by taxes of a kind which bear heavily on investment and therefore on future growth. Whether a deficit will have more or less growth-inhibiting effect than taxes of equal amount will depend on the nature of the taxes, and also on the nature of the future taxes that taxpayers expect to confront as a result of the present deficit. If the tax program which is the alternative to the deficit is of the conventional type, like a combination of our present individual and corporate income taxes, the growth-inhibiting effect of the deficit is probably larger than that of the taxes, although one cannot be sure of that. In any case, the adverse effect of the deficit is more an argument in favor of taxes than an argument against enlarging the defense program.

We have typically financed wars by deficits as well as by tax increases. The classical tolerance of deficits in wartime, in violation of the standard rules of peacetime finance, rests on two propositions. One is that war expenditures serve a more imperative national need than most other government expenditures and are therefore more worth making even if they have to be financed in a way that retards growth. The second is that the costs of the war are concentrated in a short period while its benefits are more lasting and it is desirable to spread out the final allocation of the costs over a longer period. These arguments may also justify deficit financing of the defense build-up.

Increasing the Size of the Pie. Undoubtedly the most attractive way to provide the resources for an enlarged defense program would be to raise the total national output so that it is not necessary to divert output from non-defense uses by cutting non-defense expenditures of government or raising taxes or increasing the deficit. Unfortunately, we do not know with any reliability how to raise the national output on a scale which would relieve us of these painful necessities.

The arithmetic is essential and simple. In round numbers, in 1979, before the recession, taxes were 20 percent of GNP and with output growing by 2.5 percent per annum we would need taxes equal to 22 percent of GNP in four years to pay for the projected expenditures including the medium defense program. Then to avoid the need for the tax increase we would have to make the GNP higher in four years than it would otherwise have been, and not only higher but higher by at least a certain amount. Specifically, it would have to be 10 percent higher. To get there, the GNP would have to rise by 5 percent per annum for four years, instead of by 2.5 percent. We have never achieved that for four years in a row except in recovery from a recession, and we don't know how to do it.

It is probably true that if the ratio of taxes to GNP were held at 20 percent instead of raised to 22 percent, the GNP would grow more rapidly. But there is no evidence to suggest that it would grow *sufficiently* more rapidly to supply the needed revenue.

One may say that even if tax restraint or tax reduction will not solve the whole problem of financing the defense program, it will solve part of the problem by making the GNP grow more rapidly. But if the lower taxes do not solve the whole problem they may not solve even part of it. That is, if the lower taxes mean a higher deficit, the deficit may make the GNP lower rather than higher by crowding out private investment.

It is not absolutely impossible that lower taxes would raise the national income enough to yield higher revenue, but the available evidence indicates that the possibility is very low. The risk in a policy which seeks to finance an enlarged defense program by lower tax rates is that it will result in larger deficits. As I have indicated above, that is not in itself necessarily fatal. The great danger is that a combination of lower revenue and insistence on balancing the budget or minimizing deficits will squeeze the defense program down to an inadequate size. Advocates of the low-tax route who are also devoted to a large defense program must recognize that defense may suffer if the bet on the revenue-raising power of low taxes does not pay off.

ENLARGING the American defense program will not be free. The case for it is that failure to enlarge the program will be infinitely more costly. The fact is that even a substantial increase of the defense program, relative to its present size, will require only marginal sacrifice from the American people. This sacrifice can be borne in ways that do not weigh upon the very poor, do not need to cause inflation, and do not seriously slow the growth of the American economy. There are various combinations of policies with respect to taxes, non-defense expenditures, and government borrowing that can bring about the desired result. Different combinations will have different effects, and people will have different preferences among them. But for people who take the defense problem seriously, insistence on the preferred method of financing an enlarged defense program cannot be allowed to stand in the way of achieving the defense program we need.

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The Travels of Malcolm Cowley

Robert Alter

He admitted with ready generosity that men like Sinclair Lewis and Dreiser had done something to point out the diseases with which *laissez-faire* economy had infected us; but he foresaw for the immediate future a literature of poems and manifestoes with which the factory hands, the farmers, and the office workers would be bombarded by revolutionists from airplanes. If a capitalist war were declared again, he believed it could be stopped by these means, and he was even taking lessons in flying.

—EDMUND WILSON
Memoirs of Hecate County

"CONVICTIONS," Nietzsche observed in *Human, All-Too-Human,* "are more dangerous enemies of truth than lies." In our century of ideological ferment, the accuracy of that shrewd aphorism has often been disquietingly confirmed, not only in political assertion and action but also in intellectual life. The impingement of ideology on literature has been a particularly problematic instance of the relation between politics and art because it has laid upon novelists and poets and critics a heavy freight of "convictions" when, according to our stereotypical ideal, as serious writers they should have been moving unimpeded toward the discovery through language of at least some personal truth.

Obviously, no writer ever gives a really innocent account of the world: his assumed values necessarily determine what he sees and how he conceives of the truth; and since these values must to some extent be grounded in his relation to class, culture, society, and state, virtually any act of writing is ultimately implicated in political considerations. But if, as I would argue, an essential autonomy of perception lies at the heart of literary creation, the consequences of a writer's explicit adherence to an ideological system may be fundamentally different from the effects of his merely assuming or professing certain political values, however extreme or even repugnant those values may seem to us.

America in the 1930's presents an instructive instance of literature under the sway of ideology, for, at least in the major literary center of New York, this was the decade when revolutionary Marxism dominated writing as no formal ideology has dominated our literature before or since. The attractiveness of Marxism for American intellectuals in general during the years of the Great Depression had obvious enough causes, and it is a story that has often been told. The issue I should like to raise here is the particular attraction of radical politics for the American literary imagination, and the peculiar tension between the literary vocation which many of these writers emphatically professed and their commitment to the revolutionary ideal. Malcolm Cowley's newly published memoir of the 30's, *The Dream of the Golden Mountains,** offers valuable double-edged testimony on these questions, for it is a book equally instructive in its virtues of reportage and in its lapses and silences.

Cowley, like Stephen Spender in England, is one of those all-around men-of-letters—critic, editor, poet, memoirist—who somehow cast a larger shadow than their work because they manage to place themselves at the center of literary activity and literary politics. Throughout the 30's, Cowley served as literary editor of the *New Republic,* in which capacity, both through his own weekly reviews and through his editorial decisions, he gave his section of the magazine a distinctly Marxist and often explicitly Stalinist tilt (when John Dewey broke with the magazine in 1937 because in his view it had betrayed its liberal heritage, Cowley's performance as editor was one of the principal points to which he objected). Cowley was in fact a kind of restless literary lion among fellow-travelers during the 30's, circulating petitions, composing manifestoes, attending congresses of the Left, organizing radical associations of writers outside the confines of the party but never inimical to it. Now in *The Dream of the Golden Mountains* he contemplates the radicalism of his circle not confessionally, as a God That Failed, but in a tone of experience-chastened wisdom and self-understanding, as a noble but naive illusion of his youth and that of his likeminded contemporaries. And having chronicled the sojourn in Paris during the 20's of his literary generation in *Exile's*

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Return (1934), he is himself centrally concerned, by way of providing a direct sequel to that earlier book, to explain in this new volume what radicalism meant to American writers as writers.

The Dream of the Golden Mountains makes engaging reading as a document of the 30's, though it is not altogether the kind of account one would have hoped to have from Cowley. He is not really a "literary historian," as he formally designates himself in *And I Worked at the Writer's Trade* (1978), but at his best as a memoirist he writes lucidly, gracefully, and with incisive aptness. Thus the group portrait of the Lost Generation that he offers in *Exile's Return* evokes the concrete experience of literary expatriation in the 20's and provides insight into its meaning. Given the nature of the earlier book, one would have liked to find in *The Dream of the Golden Mountains* a vivid and ample description of American literary life during the Depression years. In bits and pieces, Cowley seems on the point of doing this very well, but for long stretches, a much flatter political chronicle predominates.

He gives us a beguiling introduction to his own experience of the 30's in an initial description of the family-style existence of the *New Republic* in its old offices in a New York brownstone, complete with resident gourmet chef and butler (surely intellectual magazines have not had it so good since). In the subsequent chapters, there are some memorable local images of writers Cowley knew—Dos Passos, Sinclair Lewis, the Fitzgeralds, and, at greater length, Hart Crane, who was accompanied by Cowley's first wife on the trip from Mexico that ended in the poet's suicide. A single sentence on Dreiser shows how effective Cowley's prose can be in rendering such figures: "His mind, it often seemed to us, was like an attic in an earthquake, full of big trunks that slithered about and popped open one after another, so that he spoke sometimes as a Social Democrat, sometimes as a Marxist, sometimes as almost a fascist, and sometimes as a sentimental reformer."

But Cowley's principal aim, as I have said, is to provide an explanation —there are moments when it verges on apologia —for the gravitation of literary people toward Marxist politics, and with that purpose in mind, he devotes an inordinate amount of space to a simple review of public events in which for the most part he did not participate directly, and which have been the subject of innumerable historical accounts. Whole chapters are assigned to the epidemic of bank failures in 1932, the Bonus Army, the National Hunger March, the career of the NRA, and even Cowley's peripheral presence as observer on a couple of these political occasions does not help him to shed much new light on them. The amount of attention given to such events and movements produces a certain regrettable quality of diffuseness in the book, though of course what Cowley assumes is that the story has to be retold in order to make understandable the sharp turn to the Left on the part of American writers of the period.

First, just before the Crash, the Sacco-Vanzetti trial had raised grave doubts about justice in America. Then, the writers who had come of age during the 20's in a climate of hedonism, devil-may-care cynicism, elitist devotion to art, suddenly found themselves surrounded by a landscape of disaster. A million or more displaced Americans were on the road as hoboes; wretched shantytowns spread like a murrain at the outskirts of our cities; protesting unemployed veterans were treated like criminal subversives; striking workers were clubbed into submission, sometimes actually gunned down by thugs supposedly enforcing the law.

The 1932 visit to the striking miners of Pineville, Kentucky by a delegation of writers, including Cowley, Edmund Wilson, and Waldo Frank, which is effectively recounted here, was an emblematic event in the intellectuals' discovery of this hitherto ignored American reality. The writers were threatened, briefly arrested, a couple of them beaten, and then they were hustled out of town at gunpoint by the local police. There is an eloquent photograph in *The Dream of the Golden Mountains* of Waldo Frank's battered head, crisscrossed with surgical tape: writers were being taught with a vengeance about the brute force to which the powerless in their society were exposed.

On these crisis-ridden public grounds alone, it is not surprising that many intellectuals should have arrived at a radical diagnosis of the national malady. Thus Cowley, in a rejoinder to Archibald MacLeish in the *New Republic* (September 30, 1933),* could proclaim that our men who gave their lives in the Great War had in fact died in vain; for "the invaders have come and taken our land in spite of those who died." It is a way of defining the national predicament at once propagandistically rousing and profoundly misconceived, and underlying it is an assumption characteristic of 30's radicals which we shall consider presently.

In any case, in *The Dream of the Golden Mountains* Cowley is not content to attribute the movement leftward to the brute impact of public events. Instead, he wants to argue that there was a unique fit between the revolutionary ideal and the deepest inner needs of his generation of writers. He characterizes that ideal in his foreword as a "daydream of revolu-

* A generous selection of Cowley's *New Republic* pieces from the 30's has been assembled by Henry Dan Piper under the title, *Think Back on Us* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1967).

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tionary brotherhood," managing in this way both to expose the ideal as an illusion and to evoke its grandeur, its nobility, its sweetness, for the dreamers:

> There was hope. . . , the apocalyptic hope that a City of Man would rise on the other side of disaster. By surrendering their middle-class identities, by joining the workers in an idealized army, writers might help to overthrow "the system" and might go marching with comrades, shoulder to shoulder, out of injustice and illogic into the golden mountains. That was the dream in an exalted form; I remember reading it in the shining eyes of younger people.

The way the rhetoric begins to go bad is symptomatic of Cowley's fundamentally sentimental approach to his subject. If a phrase like "shoulder to shoulder" may be attributed to a mildly satiric imitation of the political slogans used by the revolutionists themselves, that final reading of the ideal in the shining eyes of the young, which sounds like a line from a *poshlost* patriotic cantata, is solely the responsibility of the author and an awkward reflection of the stance he has assumed. Perhaps intellectuals always tend to sentimentality when they sound the theme of solidarity, for it generally issues from a sense of self-pity over their own condition of alienation. The prospect of comradeship is in fact Cowley's most recurrent explanation for the revolutionary politics of the American writers: one begins to feel that they turned to Marx and Lenin and Stalin chiefly because they were lonely. In this mood, Cowley observes later on:

> For Communism not only furnished a clear answer to the problems raised by the Depression —that was the economic side of it—and not only promised to draw writers from their isolation by creating a vital new audience for the fine arts in general—that was the professional side—but it also seemed capable of supplying the moral qualities that writers had missed in bourgeois society: the comradeship in struggle, the self-imposed discipline, the ultimate purpose (any action being justified insofar as it contributed to the proletarian revolution), the opportunity for heroism, and the human dignity. Communism offered at least the possibility to be reborn into a new life.

Communism so conceived provides the perfect sequel to the story Cowley had told in *Exile's Return*—and, in fact, this passage is close in substance to the original 1934 revolutionary epilogue of that book, wisely deleted in later editions. The 20's, at least in Cowley's account, had been a time of sick souls: he concludes his portrait of the generation with the exemplary tale of Harry Crosby, a poet who committed suicide at the age of thirty-one. The 30's then provided in Marxist doctrine a beautifully effective framework for conversionary experiences of a particularly millenarian character. The most prominent symptom, moreover, of the spiritual malaise of writers in the 20's, as Cowley describes it, was precisely their loneliness. In the America where they had grown up, they had no responsive audience for their work, no sense of deep connection with the national culture; and in Europe, from which most of them would finally be impelled to return, they were isolated by background and language, embarked on an exuberant but also vaguely uneasy intellectual holiday. If the Symbolist Tower, with its invitation to retreat from the vulgar masses, overshadowed serious Western writing in the 20's, as Edmund Wilson had argued in *Axel's Castle*, critics like Cowley in the 30's could feel a self-congratulatory sense of exultation in issuing revolutionary invitations for literature to descend from the Tower, as he did in 1938 at the conclusion of a piece on Yeats's *Autobiography*: the new social poets, he proposed, may have to surrender certain subtleties, "yet they might gain immeasureably from their closeness to a vast new audience whose language they speak and whose desires they express" (*New Republic*, September 28, 1938).

Much of this explanation of the appeal of revolution for writers seems valid enough, though I am inclined to suspect that the odd emphasis on loneliness may project on the face of the generation a personal preoccupation of Cowley's, and the repeated focus on rapturous images of golden mountains and brothers marching together leaves certain aspects of the radical experience entirely out of the picture. In any case, Cowley's own testimony as well as his retrospective interpretation demonstrates how different in many fundamental respects literary radicalism of the 30's was from its counterpart in the late 60's. The earlier wave of radicalism was rigorously ideological in character, possessing a precise technical vocabulary, a defined political program, and for party members and fellow-travelers, an ultimate allegiance to a specific political entity, the Soviet Union. The messianic hopefulness of the movement, as Cowley observes, was intermingled with a peculiar set of expectations about the vital part that writers as writers would play in the radical enterprise: the proletarian literature they were to create would help bring about the revolution, and the revolution fulfilled would in turn give them an ideal audience of true comrades as well as an ideal subject of human dignity at last realized in history (perhaps, if one may invoke the Soviet model, in a glorious vision of tractors rumbling into the crimson sunset).

Finally, the 30's radicals often evinced a kind of wistful Americanism, returning to their native heritage, paradoxically, through the vehicle of revolutionary doctrine. There is a self-conscious love of the American landscape, American lore, the poor and humble of the American people, the lib-

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ertarian traditions of American history, in a good deal of this 30's writing. Cowley's image of a land invaded, a nation usurped, is symptomatic: the revolutionary program would restore America to itself. Elsewhere, Cowley praised Granville Hicks's *The Great Tradition* precisely for what he conceived to be its success in "show[ing] that revolutionary writing, instead of being alien to the American tradition, was always at the heart of it" (*New Republic*, November 8, 1933).

In contrast to all this, the radicalism of the 60's was less truly ideological than attitudinal, conceived the world less in socioeconomic terms than in racist categories. Like the more rigorously doctrinaire Marxism of the 30's, it divided humanity into schematically opposed forces of good and evil, but the former were generally identified by the darkness of their pigmentation: it often sufficed to be an ex-colonial nation populated by non-Caucasians or at least by non-Europeans in order to be seen as a beacon of liberty, no matter how murderously repressive the actual form of government, no matter how ruthlessly aggressive the intentions toward neighboring countries, dark-skinned or otherwise. The correlative of this bad conscience as Occidentals was a powerful revulsion from what the 60's radicals liked to call "Amerika"—meaning not only the notorious military-industrial complex that was said to rule the country, but also the look and feel and smell of American consumer culture with its middle-class comforts, which, after all, had been the dream of the golden mountains toward which the *average* American had been successfully advancing during the first two postwar decades. America was no longer imagined as a nation usurped but as a country eaten to the core with a malignant growth nurtured by its own corrupt character—a growth which now threatened to infect all mankind.

This rancorous vision had rather little of the messianic hopefulness that marked the radicalism of the 30's, and in any event literature was not imagined to have any pride of place in the unfolding order of Third World liberation. Some of the student revolutionaries of the 60's were in fact anti-intellectual, openly reviling the written word, even undertaking such idealistic projects as the destruction of library card-catalogues. There was now no ideal of a new proletarian literature to be fashioned as a revolutionary instrument, and the radicalism of the times was far from engulfing the major American literary centers. There was, admittedly, a certain vogue of poems that flaunted images of napalm-burned Asian peasants, and some poets were moved as far into disaffection as Adrienne Rich, who proclaimed in one memorable poem that she felt guilty for writing in the language of the oppressor. But these were exceptions to the general rule (perhaps encouraged in part by the practical consideration that the protest poem had a perfect audience and occasion in the teach-in). There was scarcely any substantial attempt to create a body of radical imaginative literature in the American 60's; most of our leading writers were touched only peripherally by the movement and some (like John Updike and Saul Bellow) remained quietly contemptuous of it.

The 60's revolutionaries, in their own term, were "radicalized"—a locution that probably reflects the increasing tendency of American English to describe human realities as mechanical process but that also reveals, I suspect, an assumption of instantaneous and total transformation. The 30's Marxists, in their more decorous idiom, "went Left"—in many cases, treading cautiously as they went because the formidable and not altogether trustworthy apparatus of the Communist party stood at the end of that path, and carrying their baggage of literary aspirations with them. Malcolm Cowley, because he places such emphasis on those idealistically shining eyes fixed on a golden horizon, does not give much sense of what happened morally to these leftward travelers when they arrived at the outskirts of the party. His memoir, that is, conveys little of the ruthlessness, the orgies of character assassination, the readiness to prostitute literature, the willingness to abandon individual conscience, that went on in the name of loyalty to the revolutionary cause. In these more disagreeable aspects of life on the Left, Cowley himself was frequently enough involved. One need not insist that a memoir be a confession, but Cowley's account of the 30's foreshortens and blurs the moral history of the times by breaking off around 1935, with merely a summary chapter to tie up the decade. What is chiefly omitted in this fashion is the impact of the Moscow Trials, which was the central trauma of the 30's for leftists, violently splitting the radical intellectuals in America between Stalinists, who found ways to justify mass murder of staggering proportions, and those who felt compelled to conclude that Soviet Russia had hideously perverted any conceivable revolutionary ideal.

Cowley himself, with minor reservations, remained essentially on the side of the Stalinists through the end of the decade, something about which he is not altogether candid in *The Dream of the Golden Mountains*. He could never bring himself to join the party, he tells us, because he was "a writer primarily and not a revolutionist or a politician," and was in fact dismayed by what party membership seemed to be doing to many writers' prose style; and by 1935, "I had developed other than literary doubts about what the party was doing in America and Russia too." Such doubts did not prevent him from defending the activities of the GPU in the Spanish Civil War, from attacking the anti-Stalinist *Partisan Review* as comparable to the worst organs of reaction, and, as late as 1940, in a

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review of W.B. Krivitsky's *In Stalin's Secret Service*, from asserting this of the Great Purge: "[Krivitsky] wants us to believe something that seems highly improbable—namely, that there was never any plot against Stalin and that all the victims of the purge were wantonly executed" (*New Republic*, January 22, 1940). In this particular review, Cowley does make gestures toward striking a balance, admitting that there are "gangsters" as well as "heroes" in the Soviet Union, whose existence has forced him to revise his earlier judgment of that country; but the general effect, as the sentence I have quoted indicates, is an apologia for the Soviet regime and, as Edmund Wilson objected in a vehement letter to Cowley, "Stalinist character assassination [directed at Krivitsky] of the most reckless and libelous sort."*

An earlier letter of Wilson's (October 20, 1938), occasioned by Cowley's attack on *Partisan Review*, touches on an essential ambiguity of the involvement of American writers in radical politics. Wilson, who himself had become increasingly disenchanted with the Soviet regime after his trip to Russia in 1935, first rebukes Cowley for both his polemical tactics and the positions he had been taking: "You're a great guy to talk about the value of a non-partisan literary review after the way you've been plugging the damned old Stalinist line, which gets more and more cockeyed by the minute." Then, Wilson goes on to a kind of moral exhortation which is not untypical of his letters to his literary friends and associates:

> I wish you would purge your head of politics—revolutionary and literary alike—and do the valuable work of which you're capable. I think politics is bad for you because it's not real to you: because what you're really practicing is not politics but literature; and it only messes up a job like yours to pretend it's something else and try to use it like something else.

Precisely in this regard, it is important to draw some distinction between writers and non-literary intellectuals in the movement leftward. There were of course 30's intellectuals who lived and breathed politics, who conceived the world in political categories, like Sidney Hook or his friend Herbert Solow, whose progress from the *Menorah Journal* through Marxism to the staff of *Fortune* magazine constitutes a kind of paradigmatic career for New York intellectuals of his generation.† But for many literary people, as Wilson argues in the case of Cowley, the politics was not altogether real, and giving oneself wholeheartedly to what wasn't real could lead both to unconscionable blindness in political activity and to the twisting or maiming of literature itself.

Perhaps the most egregious instance of the latter effect was the illusory ideal of proleterian literature with the parade of crude, schematic, tendentious works that it engendered. Cowley, at a retrospective distance of four decades, is appropriately satiric on the formulaic, hortatory features of this school, but he is still able to assert of Clifford Odets's *Waiting for Lefty* that "for all its faults, [it] comes as close to being a classic as anything that directly emerged from the proleterian school." One wonders what notion of a literary classic could lie behind this remark; for Odets's one-act play, with its noble, downtrodden workers, its sinister company bosses, its dialogue that is scarcely more than a pastiche of slogans ("Working class, unite and fight! Tear down the slaughterhouse of our old lives! Let freedom really ring," etc.), is a piece of agit-prop that only by some stretch of classification can be called literature at all. But then Cowley is allowing his perception of the play as a piece of writing to be submerged in his recollection of the first performances by Harold Clurman's Group Theater in 1935, with the participation onstage of Odets himself, Lee J. Cobb, and Elia Kazan. Even then, the play was not in the slightest degree a serious catalyst of revolution, whether among the American proletariat or the intelligentsia; but it did serve, one gathers, as a stirring ritual of solidarity for intellectuals who had gone Left, allowing them to experience as an audience the warm shoulder-to-shoulder feeling of brave comrades, and thus displacing literature with liturgy.

WHAT is at issue finally is the capacity and the responsibility of serious literature—and of course seriousness by no means precludes all kinds of playfulness—to tell the truth. In the earlier 30's, a good many writers, Cowley among them, chose to believe that Marxism offered them a set of scientifically grounded principles for telling the truth, and that their personal observation might primarily provide striking illustrations for these general principles through which history could be given a progressive direction. By the end of *The Dream of the Golden Mountains*, Cowley can summarize the fading of this illusion in the following measured terms: "Gradually we should find that the movement might diminish a writer by giving him what seemed to be noble motives for concealing part of the truth." Nicely phrased as this is, it does not quite concede enough, for if truth-telling is the gravest, most demanding task to which the writer

* Cowley has published the concluding paragraphs of a long letter he wrote in reply to Wilson in *And I Worked at the Writer's Trade* (Viking, 1978), pp. 154-157. Here he reiterates his skepticism toward Krivitsky (the review expressed a good deal more than that) and confesses that he is thoroughly sick of politics, would like to put it behind him forever. But he does not really answer Wilson's basic charge—that he was serving as an apologist for Stalinist policies.

† Solow's story has been aptly recounted as an exemplary instance of the 30's milieu by Alan Wald in a carefully documented article, "Herbert Solow: Portrait of a New York Intellectual," *Prospects*, No. 3, 1977.

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is called by his vocation, to conceal a part is to misrepresent the whole and thus fundamentally to betray one's vocation.

There is, let me suggest, a basic contradiction between ideology—any ideology—and literature, for ideology represents the world through general, programmatic, preconceived principles of explanation, while the literary imagination when it is fully alive uses the artful resources of language to make constant small or large discoveries about the general through a bold, unprejudiced evocation of the particular. This evocation will involve a considerable degree of openness to paradox, contradiction, inconsistency, unpredictability, enigma, all phenomena that ideology does not readily assimilate or even tolerate. Ideologically, Dostoevsky may have been a reactionary mystagogue, but as a writer of genius he dares to imagine his characters—socialists, anarchists, diabolists, orthodox believers, and confused *hommes moyens sensuels*—in the fullness of their wild and at times alluring individuality: he is great enough, that is, to *listen* to them instead of making them counters in a preconceived scheme.

A singleminded devotion to literature, of course, hardly places a writer above the political fray, and it certainly gives him no immunity to pernicious or merely foolish political ideas, as such notorious modern instances as Céline, Pound, Eliot, and Lawrence make clear. But there is an essential difference between a writer's appropriating from a climate of ideas and attitudes certain notions consonant with his own vision, and his adopting an ideological system; the former need not undermine his autonomy of perception while the latter necessarily does just that. Lawrence in *Women in Love* may have more than one axe to grind, but over the hum of the ideological whetstone he allows the urgent voices of his characters to speak out in the dramatic immediacy of their moral interplay (in such interplay, even the spokesman for his own ideas, Birkin, can be imagined with a measure of complicating irony). By contrast, Lawrence in *The Plumed Serpent* is working insistently with a neo-pagan, quasi-fascist ideology, and one feels too often that character, scene, and event have been forced out of shape to fit the rigid compartments of a prefabricated system.

Because literature is a representation of the world doubly mediated by the consciousness of the writer and the formal properties of his language, many of the greatest literary achievements, from Job to Joyce, have used the resonance of intricately patterned words conveying imagined acts to intimate both the unfathomable wonder and the wrenching contradictions of mind trying to grasp the world. When literature, however, becomes the handmaiden of ideology, this essential activity of our culture is aborted; for ideology evinces singularly little curiosity about the mind, being content to believe that the mind is a given which can be explained by class and economics, by national or racial traits, by biological determinism, or whatever the case may be.

WHEN Edmund Wilson in 1938 exclaimed to Cowley, "I wish you would purge your mind of politics"—perhaps, with a half-conscious echo of Dr. Johnson's "clear your mind of cant"—he may have been addressing himself as well, though he would have been too fond of his habitually authoritative stance to have admitted that, possibly not even to himself. Wilson's own day-by-day observations during this decade of revolutionary fervor have just been made available for public inspection in the second volume of his notebooks and diaries to be published to date.* Now, Wilson's journals must be taken with some caution as an index of what engaged his mind and feelings through this period, for in contrast to writers like Gide and Virginia Woolf, he did not use the journal form, apart from a few exceptional instances, for the considered, ample articulation of his attitudes and experience. Rather, these diaries are essentially a writer's workbook, largely comprised of fragmentary notes, sometimes in telegraphic style, which he thought he might use later, whether for something as immediate as a magazine article or something as indeterminate as a future piece of fiction, poetry, or drama. It is reasonable to assume, then, that at least some of what he was thinking and feeling was entirely left out of the notebooks, and much else is only intimated with cryptic terseness. Nevertheless, *The Thirties* does give us 800 pages of contemporaneous testimony by the foremost American literary intellectual of the period, and its evidence cannot be dismissed.

What might particularly surprise preconceptions about Wilson in the 30's is the paltry place, quantitatively and emotionally, that he allots in his journal to political reflection, radical or otherwise. *The Thirties* includes one fascinating document in this regard: a kind of private manifesto some 2,000 words in length which Wilson wrote to reason out for himself the considerations that were leading him to vote the Communist ticket in the presidential election of 1932. This statement jibes well enough with Cowley's general account of going Left. Capitalism is imagined to have arrived at a total and irretrievable catastrophe; liberalism and socialism ultimately align themselves with the ruling classes; while the Communists are seen as a brave brotherhood embodying the very virtues which the literary intelligentsia had never managed to possess: "They school themselves in austere living, in the discipline that makes possible united action, and in the courage required to

* *The Thirties*, edited with an introduction by Leon Edel, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 800 pp., $17.50.

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declare openly their revolutionary objects and to lead the working class against the owners." Wilson would be disabused of these illusions more rapidly and more emphatically than many of his contemporaries, but what the rest of the record of *The Thirties* leads one to suspect is that the political ideal, however visibly and sincerely professed, was never at the real center of his concerns, never enveloped his life as a writer.

The dominant event in Wilson's emotional world during the 30's was not the trauma of the Great Depression but the bizarre accidental death in 1932 of his second wife, Margaret Canby. That sudden loss, which filled him with guilt and longing and despair, obsessed him throughout the decade, haunting his dreams, casting a threat of meaninglessness over the projects and pleasures of his life, still pursuing him as late as 1940, when he was already married to Mary McCarthy. More abundant, though less emotionally fraught, than these thoughts of Margaret Canby are the clinically explicit accounts (as in *The Twenties*) of Wilson's sexual encounters with a variety of pseudonymously masked women (some of these erotic episodes, with little modification, would be inserted into "The Princess with the Golden Hair," the central novella of *Memoirs of Hecate County* that scandalized censors in 1946). I obviously do not want to suggest that Wilson between the ages of thirty-five and forty-five had little intrinsic interest in sex, only that he went into his sexual experiences with one eye to how they might become grist for the writer's mill, and I think this was even truer of his political experiences.

IN THE early 30's, Wilson was devoting a good deal of time to reportorial work of a radical, muckraking sort, but the notes he took on his expeditions into the urban and rural centers of American poverty are for the most part entirely continuous with the non-political entries in his writer's workbook, primarily motivated by the impulse of verbal mimesis. Whether the object of description is a skyline, a railroad bridge, the quality of light in a sunset, or urban destitution, the compelling task is to get the thing right in words, to find the aptest adjectives, the most revelatory metaphors, the most expressive cadences, and perhaps the single summarizing detail that catches the meaning of the scene as an immanent symbol. All these manifestations of the writer's attachment to mimesis are apparent in this record of a scene on Harrison Street in Chicago, observed during the winter of 1932-33 when Wilson was gathering material for a *New Republic* article:

> The snow, big dull dark square industrial buildings around it—blackened weeds old springs, picked bones of old cars and black old metallic junk unsalvageable even for the scaly-scabrous-looking huts that have fastened to the vacant lot like barnacles, made out of old tar paper and tin, with stovepipes all slightly crooked and buttresses of packing boxes—people who can't stand for the shelters—a pole flying a black torn rag, the flag of despair.

Such notes, of course, are the work of a self-consciously engaged writer, but one whose deepest attention is given to the writerly shaping of the experience rather than to the political cause served by the reportage. By the second half of the decade, when Wilson was already "writing out" his intellectual involvement with Marxism in *To the Finland Station* and was becoming estranged from the practical politics of the Left, these exercises in literary perception would be focused more and more on non-ideological subjects. Indeed, some of the most arresting of the later journal entries are in content and emphasis what in a few years it would become fashionable to call "existential" reflections. Wilson the literary man, turning the page of a book, suddenly observes his hand and is shocked to see in it the prehensile paw of the immemorial primate, "stubby fingers with nails at the service of the dreaming horizonless mind." Getting out of an elevator in a darkened office building, he is "appalled" by the abrupt vision of a man's face, staring at him with the indelible stamp of a primitiveness that eons have not altered: "Humanity was still an animal, still glaring out of its dark caves, not yet having mastered the world, not even comprehending what he saw. I was frightened—at him, at us all. *The horrible look of the human race*" (Wilson's emphasis). These lines were written a few months after Wilson's return from Russia, where he and many of his friends had imagined that a new hopeful order of human society was being built in the light of reason. Now, increasingly, instead of vistas of golden mountains there were dark caves which simply could not be encompassed by Marxism or, for that matter, by the explanatory apparatus of any political ideology. Wilson lacked the gifts as a writer of fiction to find in that medium an adequate expression of these brooding thoughts, but they enter profoundly into the volume which would be his most enduring collection of critical essays, *The Wound and the Bow* (1940), with its acute sense of the link between art and anguish, and its brilliant pioneering study of the troubled Dickens, "The Two Scrooges."

THE New York intellectuals, of course, despite their occasional illusions to the contrary, are not the whole of American literature, and at the very moment in which we have been observing Edmund Wilson, down in Mississippi Faulkner was putting the finishing touches on *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), in which he fashioned a remarkable fictional instrument for sounding the depths of his own caves and chasms. With

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the passage of time, this novel stands out more strongly than ever as the masterwork of American fiction of the 30's. Granted, Faulkner had the distinct advantage of genius (however wild, unreliable, and self-subverting it could be in him), but he also must have experienced an appreciable measure of freedom to be so utterly removed from all those ideological wars, the endless cliques and petitions and writers' congresses, the compromising entanglements of imaginative literature in polemic journalism, the expectations that writing should carry out a defined program and exemplify set principles. Far from this shrill scene of conscripted writers, he worked away at inventing his own eccentric artistic idiom, using models as disparate as the Bible, Cervantes, Conrad, and Joyce, and with that idiom, he articulated his compelling doom-ridden vision of Southern history.

Faulkner seeks to represent in his fiction the decaying fabric of a whole culture, but only through the mental reality of his characters, for like other modernists (and unlike the proletarian novelists), he assumes that objects, people, and events do not submit themselves to our unmediated knowledge but must necessarily be known in the multiple versions of the different minds that construe them, that constantly reinvent them. Here, for example, is how Quentin Compson in *Absalom, Absalom!* imagines the Sutpen mansion in 1865, just as the half-brothers Charles and Henry, back from the war, one bent on matrimony and the other on fratricide, are about to meet before its gate:

> Inside the gate what was once a park now spread, unkempt, in shaggy desolation, with an air dreamy, remote and aghast like the unshaven face of a man just waking from ether, up to a huge house where a young girl waited in a wedding dress made from stolen scraps, the house partaking of the air of scaling desolation, not having suffered from invasion but a shell marooned and forgotten in a backwater of catastrophe—a skeleton giving of itself in slow driblets of furniture and carpet, linen and silver, to help to die the torn and anguished men who knew, even while dying, that for months now the sacrifice and the anguish were in vain.

As in many major novels, mimesis and memory are interfused, the object of representation seen under the aspect of a certain destiny, through the warp of a highly particularized dimension of time. The passage is all one sinuous, breathless sentence, down to the perfect concluding cadence of "were in vain," which resolves the meaning of the whole evocation. An uninhibited figurative imagination, akin to the macabre 17th-century wit of Donne and Sir Thomas Browne, discovers the reality of the imagined object from line to line by translating it into metaphor: the dreamy unshaven face of a man waking from ether, a marooned ship, a cannibalized skeleton. It was no doubt with such passages in mind that Malcolm Cowley, writing in 1940, objected to Faulkner's creating "allegorical melodramas dressed up with stormy but second-rate romantic poetry." (By 1946, Cowley would play an important role as editor of the *Viking Portable Faulkner* in consolidating the reputation of the Southern novelist, but at the end of this decade of Marxist criticism, he was still insisting—the occasion was a review of *The Hamlet*—that only Faulkner's "daylight" fiction could command any respect, and that *Sanctuary* was Faulkner's best novel.)

Faulkner's weakness for overblown and self-indulgent stylistic effects is notorious, but here I think his language exhibits a beautiful rightness of intuition. For Faulkner the culture of the South after the Civil War is caught in a terrifying temporal paralysis, condemned constantly to look back on the traumatic events that destroyed all its illusions about itself, incapable—as Jean-Paul Sartre showed in his brilliant 1939 essay on *The Sound and the Fury*—of projecting any future toward which it might orient its movements. Quentin's perception of the Sutpen house, which is a small instance of Faulkner's larger enterprise, is not a "description" of the all-too-familiar white-columned Southern mansion, nor a mere embellishment of the usual picture with macabre imagery. Instead, precisely through the flamboyant figurative language, we get a sense of the mansion as a kind of synechdoche for the South trapped in the medium of historical time that has turned into a living death: an atmosphere of ether, a backwater of catastrophe, a skeleton crazily distributing, to no avail, in slow driblets, what were once its contents.

THERE is an object-lesson here in what a writer's devotion to his writing may at best achieve. Faulkner through Quentin gets at the innermost reality of his historical subject by abandoning himself with an artist's daring to the momentum of his language, to the submerged network of associations it touches within him. The Sutpen mansion thus represented is not the rehearsal of a picturesque stereotype of the fallen South, but a haunting image that somehow implicates the bizarre and contradictory predicament of evanescent man living in history. One sees why some critics have been led to argue that the impulses of fantasy and realism may have a common root. The eccentric and commanding counter-example of Faulkner in the midst of this decade of writing on the Left suggests how much literature surrenders of its capacity to tell the harsh, elusive, protean truth when it makes itself the means to political ends.

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Paradoxes of Population

Eric M. Breindel and Nick Eberstadt

OVER the centuries, the rules by which population affects national power have gradually become more complicated. In the age of emperors, kings, and tribal chiefs, it has been said, "a ruler could no more have too many subjects than a herder could have too many cattle;* the lot of a people could either improve or worsen with population growth, but with more hands in the fields, taxes in the treasury, and bodies behind armor, the power of the state could only grow. After the Industrial Revolution, whose technical advances suddenly allowed a single man to do the work of twenty, the strength of nations no longer depended primarily upon numbers. Great Britain could carve itself an empire ten times the size of its own population; Meiji Japan, relying upon "modern" strategy and weapons, could best Czarist Russia in a head-on war. As economic and technological progress was changing the relationship between numbers and strength, the select spread of "liberal government" was limiting the ability of certain governments to maneuver. Once leadership becomes a public trust limited by the consent of the governed, an increase in population does not necessarily put more cards in a government's hands. Indeed, a government's options could even shrink as the strength of the nation grew.

In our time, population seems to be on its way back to a key role in the determination of national strength: as the entire world eventually industrializes, the importance of numbers must once again reassert itself. This road, however, is likely to be long and uncertain. At the same time, as both societies and governments become more complex, as the "moral force" of democracy grows—both in nations which adhere to democratic principles and in those which do not—and as the desire of governments the world over to "plan," or at least plan for, the lives of their citizens continues to increase, demographic patterns are ever more likely to set barriers from within upon the policies of colonels, prime ministers, sultans, and "chairmen."

In what follows we shall look at some of the political consequences of population change in rich and poor countries under democratic, authoritarian, and totalitarian governments. We shall look at some of the things which population growth is supposed to do, but does not do, and some of the surprising and unrecognized effects which it actually does have. A few general rules will emerge. It will be seen that population growth is not the horrible menace to the poor of the world that we so frequently hear it called and that government efforts to alter the fertility patterns of a nation are both expensive and ineffective, even in the most controlled societies. Nevertheless, the population factor turns out to be a key to understanding the friendly, and sometimes unfriendly, competition in which nations engage. It helps us better understand the sorts of constraints under which both rich and poor nations must operate. It can clarify developments otherwise only partially explicable, and it can help predict otherwise unexpected shifts in the fortunes of the major actors on the world stage.

II

NO DEMOGRAPHIC change in modern time has been so thoroughly misinterpreted as the "population explosion," that sudden and rapid spurt of growth in almost every less developed country, which began just after World War II. In popular, academic, and policy discussions alike, rapid population growth is almost always treated as an ominous threat to the economic well-being, and even to the very political viability, of the states "afflicted" with it. Perhaps the single best statement of the widespread consensus about the necessarily negative effects of population growth on poor countries is the National Academy of Sciences' classic report, *Rapid Population Growth.*†

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* Nathan Keyfitz, "Demographic Theory and Decline: An Historical Survey," in William Petersen, ed., *Readings in Population*, Macmillan, 1970.

† Johns Hopkins, 1971.

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According to the report, population growth always impedes economic progress, and sometimes even prevents it entirely. If population growth throttles economic progress, the report continues, then it must also complicate and obstruct the process of "nation building" in the underdeveloped countries: less money per person is available for establishing schools, laying down roads, building up a civil service, and the like. The ultimate effects of population growth, we are told, are even more insidious. By exacerbating the social, economic, and administrative problems with which these fragile new governments must cope, population growth weakens and destabilizes regimes, laying the foundations for their eventual overthrow or collapse.

That this vision should be so generally accepted today, even within institutions which deal with political and economic problems of poor countries on a daily basis, such as the U.S. Agency for International Development and the World Bank, is baffling, for there is a wealth of evidence to suggest that this interpretation of events is fundamentally flawed.

If it were impossible, or even extremely difficult, for nations with rapidly growing populations to develop, then the rise in wealth and power of nations like Brazil, Israel, South Korea, and Taiwan over the past generation (or of the United States in preceding generations) would be difficult, or even impossible, to explain. After all, Brazil, Israel, South Korea, and Taiwan experienced some of the postwar world's very fastest rates of population growth, and until the turn of the century, America's rate of population growth was faster than Bangladesh's today. Population growth did not, in fact, prevent the economic and political rise of the West in the 18th and 19th centuries (at a time when its rate of natural increase was two to three times faster than the rest of the world's); nor has the "achievement" of zero population growth forestalled the political and economic eclipse of the once mighty nation of Great Britain. If rapid population growth necessarily condemned nations to economic stagnation and political turmoil, we might expect Kenya, with its rate of population growth in excess of 3 percent a year, to be foundering economically and awash with strife, and Argentina, with one of the lowest growth rates in the poor world, 1.4 percent a year, to be a pillar of political stability and an outstanding example of economic progress; precisely the opposite has been true.

The connection between population growth and economic or political development is not nearly as simple and clear-cut as the prevailing Malthusian wisdom suggests. If population growth means more mouths to feed, then it also means more hands to work. If it means more demands on the economy, then it also means growing markets. If it means straining the ability of the earth to produce enough natural resources, then it also opens up opportunities for resource-saving, and productivity-increasing, innovations. And if it means greater challenges to the government, it may encourage as well the sorts of flexible, creative responses which characterize the successful governing elites of the world.

In almost every discussion of the population explosion, one essential point is entirely forgotten. The populations of less developed countries are growing rapidly, not because their peoples have suddenly started breeding like rabbits, but rather because they have finally stopped dying like flies. Over the past generation, life expectancy in the Third World (if we include China in this ill-defined category) has risen by more than 50 percent: from under forty years, to up very close to sixty. Infant mortality has dropped by something like two-thirds; similarly, the incidence of crippling and debilitating adult diseases—polio, sleeping sickness, leprosy, smallpox, yaws—has been dramatically reduced. In almost every area of the poor world, people are eating better than ever before. All this speaks to the fact that the populations of the poor countries have become stronger and healthier over the past generation. Is it unreasonable to suggest that their labor forces have become more productive over the past generation, in large part, for precisely this reason? What we antiseptically label "economic growth" is powered by the sweat off human backs in most of the poor world. Far from preventing economic progress, it might be argued, rapid population growth has been associated with the very forces which have made economic progress possible, and has in itself contributed to economic development in a great many of the poor countries of the world.

DEMOGRAPHERS and economists tend to think about population in abstract and generalized terms; such theorizing, alas, is seldom of much practical use. This is because the effects of population change depend on specifics: the specific sort of change, the specific society, the specific economy, the specific political system. Although rapid population growth need not frustrate economic development or limit the options of a regime—in many cases it may do just the opposite—it has had this effect in the world's largest nation, the People's Republic of China.

Mao's rhetoric about population growth, and his government's policies regarding this issue, could not have been more at odds. Like Marx, Mao railed against the intellectual bankruptcy of Malthusianism; he argued that China's greatest asset was its people, and that "socialist" societies need not worry about population problems, since these were a capitalist phenomenon. For the last decade of his life, however, China engaged in a massive population-control campaign. Commitment to reducing the nation's fertility remained unwavering throughout all the periods of uncertainty, confusion, and reversal which characterized

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political life under Mao; surprisingly, the other unaffected programs, such as atomic research, were being held above politics because their pursuit was deemed essential to national security. After Mao's death, China formalized its commitment to population control by writing it into the constitution—China is the only nation ever to have taken this step. What explains this striking discrepancy?

The answer seems to lie in the race between food and population. Over the past generation, China's population has grown at an average rate of about 2 percent a year. By modern standards, this is not extraordinarily high; it is, in fact, below the average for the Third World as a whole during this period. On the other hand, China's rate of growth in food production was extraordinarily low; from the early 1950's to the mid-1970's, no other region of the poor world increased its food-grain supply so slowly.

Yet China's inability to increase its per-capita output of food grain was due not to the growth of its people, but to mistakes, failures, and restrictions on the part of its government. Agricultural research was given short shrift. Massive agricultural investment projects were often ill-planned and poorly managed; sometimes they even *reduced* crop output. More disturbingly, the collective system of production was haunted by problems of incentive and worker motivation, as is suggested by the fact that the 5 percent of China's farmland in private hands produced over 20 percent of the nation's food. From 1955 until 1977, according to one of Deng Xiaoping's aides, there was no increase at all in the output per person of grain (which supplies the Chinese with five-sixths of their calories and most of their protein); for much of this period, in fact, it seemed that crop production might run second to population growth.

For twenty years, the Chinese government has pursued three strategic objectives: to bolster its defenses against an increasingly powerful and hostile Soviet neighbor, to modernize and expand its industrial sectors, and to improve the standard of living in the countryside. Although it might be possible to accomplish some or all of these objectives without easing the food constraint—rural standards of living, for example, rose during the 1950's on the sheer strength of *redistributing* food—increasing the availability of food per capita, and the output of food per worker, would increase the regime's ability to maneuver and make it more likely that the government would be able to secure its strategic ends. In the extreme, the government was faced with two choices: to abandon the "socialist" experiment in the countryside, or to push down the birth rate.

For Mao, of course, the first option could never be considered; this would defeat the very purpose of his fifty-year struggle. His successors, however, apparently feel no qualms in adjusting the parameters of the "experiment." One such adjusted parameter has been in attitudes toward the West. If China is going to modernize its agriculture, which, objectively, is still the base of its economy, massive transfers of Western skill, technology, and probably even capital will be necessary; these are currently being contracted for. It would be wrong to think the Chinese have turned toward the West, and especially toward the United States, with any particular joy. There are unpleasant memories associated with acknowledging the superiority of the West, and with concluding essentially one-sided deals. It would be naive to assume that the Chinese will not end such relationships as soon as they possibly can. What must be remembered, however, is that the turn to the West might have been long postponed if the regime had not felt itself threatened by a population problem of its own making.

TOTALITARIAN regimes are frequently threatened by absolute rates of population growth—these usually turn out to be either too high or too low to conform to the state's inflexible plans for its future. But only a handful of Third World nations are actually totalitarian; most simply lack the necessary administrative sophistication and technological wherewithal to do more than terrorize limited fractions of their people. For the vast majority of Third World countries, it is not absolute but *relative* rates of population growth which affect a nation's economic progress and political future.

Occasionally a difference in demographic growth rates *between* poor countries can end in war: El Salvador's conflict with Honduras in 1969, for example, was triggered by Salvadoreans who were illegally crossing the border and homesteading the less densely populated Honduran countryside.* Such events, however, are merely esoteric exceptions to the general rule. The differential growth rates which matter most to a poor nation are internal, occurring among competing ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups. The boundaries of most Third World states were drawn by foreign rulers in the past three centuries. Their objective was to make colonial administration easier, a goal which seldom coincided with the preservation of ethnic or cultural homogeneity. Of the roughly 130 Third World states in the international community today, about half contain five or more major ethnic groups; in about two-fifths, the largest single group makes up less than half the total population. In such societies, the political balance among groups is often delicate, and differential fertility, which can tip the demographic scales against the current order (whether or not the regime is nominally democratic), can unsettle societies, paralyze economies, and topple governments.

In Nigeria, a nation where three major ethnic

* For an interesting account of this peculiar war, see William H. Durham's *Scarcity and Survival in Central America*, Stanford University Press, 1979.

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groups vie for national power, a census in the early 1960's proved to be the catalyst for civil war. Each group implausibly overrepresented its population for the purposes of securing extra seats in parliament and a larger share of the federal revenue; ethnic competition and distrust made a mutually agreeable settlement impossible. The result was an erosion of the power of the central government, a series of coups, the secession of the Ibo state, and the political chaos, economic devastation, and human tragedy of the Biafran war.

Though the collapse of Lebanon has been attributed to many factors, one which has been ignored is the fertility difference between Muslims, who on the average have over six children per family, and Christians, who average about three. In 1943, a reinterpretation of the Lebanese constitution allocated seats in parliament to Christians over Muslims, at a 6:5 ratio. The basis for this proportion was a census conducted ten years earlier, and a contemporary "statistical survey" which allowed a substantial number of Christians "temporarily resident abroad" to be counted.

From 1943 onward, the proportion of Muslims in Lebanon increased steadily, but the Christian-dominated government refused to hold a census: it was all too likely that political power would slip from its hands. This refusal for over thirty years to count the population steadily undermined the legitimacy of the existing democratic order in Muslim eyes. By 1976, when the delicate balance between Christians and Muslims finally collapsed, the Christians found themselves an outnumbered minority in a Muslim-dominated state.

In Southeast Asia, the failure of the Malaysia-Singapore union in the early 1960's was due largely to Malay fears that federation with Singapore, an overwhelmingly Chinese island-state, would make Malays a minority in the new legislature. Within Malaysia, less than half the population was Malay; the Chinese, whom the Malays distrusted and feared, made up nearly two-fifths. The failure of this federation may have weakened or strengthened the region politically, but it has almost certainly been detrimental to both Singapore and Malaysia economically. Even today, the Malays' fear of being overrun by the Chinese makes the news. Malaysia's recent threat to shoot on sight boat people seeking asylum on its shores was informed not by Malaysia's inability to accommodate an influx of industrious people, which it could certainly do to its own advantage, but by the fact that the Vietnamese boat people are ethnic Chinese. A government, it seems, need not believe in the one-man/one-vote principle to acknowledge the oldest demographic principle of civil and political life: there is strength in numbers.

In no arena in the less developed world might numbers have seemed so potentially decisive as in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Yet for more than thirty years the state of Israel, with its Jewish population now barely above 3 million, has successfully withstood the hostility of a host of nearby Arab states with a combined population currently exceeding 100 million. In 1967, Israel defeated enemies with seventeen times as many people in a three-front war; since then, it has generally been agreed that the population factor cannot seriously affect Israel's immediate security situation. Although Israel is small, conventional wisdom holds that its considerable edge in industrial base, military technology, strategic planning, and organizational ability makes numbers unimportant.

But 1967 was the wrong time to conclude that events had rendered the population factor irrelevant. As a result of that war, demographics became a major issue in Israeli policy. For the first time, relative numbers did pose a threat to Israel's future: not from without, but from within the state's new borders.

During the nearly two years since the Sadat visit to Jerusalem, the array of factors influencing the politics of peace in the Middle East has received careful consideration in the Western press. One impediment to a peace settlement, Israel's perception of its own security requirements, has been much discussed. The supposed claims of Zionist ideology have also been closely scrutinized. America's willingness and ability to pressure Israel—to "save Israel in spite of herself," as some would have it—has been studied as well. These factors have clearly played a major role in both the Israel-Egypt peace negotiations and in the current discussions on the crucial issue of West Bank-Gaza-Palestinian autonomy. It would seem that an additional factor, arguably more crucial, has long been ignored: that of sheer numbers. President Carter's unexpected success in convincing the Israelis to agree to autonomy for a Palestinian entity—a major stumbling block to an Egyptian-Israeli peace—can be understood far more easily if the demographic issue is taken into account.

Various projections demonstrate that if Israel retains the territories, its Jewish majority will disappear—probably by the year 2000, or shortly thereafter.* With immigration unlikely to offset prevailing fertility patterns significantly, Israel faces an acute choice, defined early on by Abba Eban as one between "being great (in terms of territory) and remaining Jewish." Even Prime Minister Begin's mentor, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the founder and patriarch of Revisionist Zionism, argued in the 1930's that the creation of a Jewish demographic majority in Palestine should be Zionism's first priority.

Israeli governments have not kept secret their desire to firm up Jewish birth rates, or even push

* The numerical projections are discussed in detail in our article, "The Population Factor in the Middle East," *International Security*, Spring 1979, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 190-96.

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them higher, but policy efforts in this realm have been consistently unsuccessful. At the same time, Israel's perception of a prospective Palestinian state as a mortal threat to its national security is unlikely to change. It can, therefore, be argued that a plan highly similar to the Camp David agreement would have had to be proposed, sooner or later, whether or not Sadat had undertaken his peace initiative, whether or not U.S. pressure was at work, indeed, all other forces notwithstanding. A political separation between Israel proper and the occupied territories, and as a consequence of that separation, the creation of an alternative political entity for the West Bank-Gaza Strip Palestinians, is simply a policy necessity.

Of course, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that the peace treaty, and the specific autonomy plan formulated therein, will collapse for any number of reasons. Autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza, however, will remain an essential goal of Israeli policy. It is impossible to understand the diplomatic acrobatics surrounding the treaty and the autonomy negotiations without grasping this point. It is not in Israel's interest to seek the collapse of the agreement reached with Sadat on the broad outlines of the settlement of the Palestinian question. Since Israel must relinquish political control of the occupied territories for reasons of its own, the end result would be renewed negotiations —Israel might well be forced to accept less favorable terms, or even to make a unilateral concession.

III

For the first time since the Middle Ages, certain European countries are experiencing the phenomenon of sustained population decline. This time the cause of the drop is not rising death rates but falling birth rates. The decrease in absolute numbers is still very limited. Interestingly, it is manifest in both Germanies, giving policy-makers in Bonn and in East Berlin cause for serious concern. The immediate impact of a fall in population size is obvious. The Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) face acute labor shortages, making production goals in their highly industrialized societies increasingly difficult to meet. And both countries are, in demographic terms, becoming top-heavy—a disproportionate number of elderly people, no longer productive and drawing pensions, place a formidable drain on state resources. Population decline is not distributed evenly throughout the population.

Declining birth rates and high life expectancies are today the norm throughout the developed world. The accentuation of these tendencies in Germany affords a glimpse at a possible crisis of the future: "depopulation." The booming West German economy is clearly threatened by the lack of local manpower. The Federal Republic has experimented with an incentives program, designed to boost fertility and halt the decline, but has met with little success in this endeavor. At the moment, the problem is being dealt with through the importation of foreign labor. The millions of *Gastarbeiter* located in West Germany's major cities represent a much-discussed social problem, one which Bonn cannot expect to disappear.

Thus far, however, West Germany's labor shortages, its foreign workers, and its large elderly population do not seem problems sufficiently severe to place a question mark over the future of Europe's leading industrial power. So long as international migration is possible in Europe, West Germany will be able to deal with the "depopulation" crisis. And while a change for the worse in the Federal Republic's economic capacity would have a negative impact on the international economic order, West Germany is, in the final analysis, answerable only to itself. An independent democracy is able to confront a potential demographic crisis from the standpoint of what is best for its own people. Thus the crisis itself will only become acute when the citizens of West Germany experience hardship as a result of population decline. Whatever the future holds for West Germany—the *Gastarbeiter* problem and all its ramifications notwithstanding —economic hardship does not appear to be in the offing. And the West German demographic decline has, as yet, had no major international impact.

East Germany is an entirely different matter. For one thing, the East Germans do not enjoy genuine national independence. The GDR is required by the Soviet Union to maintain a certain level of concessionary trade, and to provide its quota of Warsaw Pact troops on an annual basis. Nor can the East Germans import foreign labor. Manpower from elsewhere in the Soviet bloc is simply unavailable, since low fertility rates prevail in every Warsaw Pact state. And neither living conditions nor social and political circumstances in East Germany are attractive enough to draw a major influx of foreign workers from outside Eastern Europe.

As a result, the policy alternatives are limited; the GDR can either place escalating productivity demands on local laborers or take steps to increase the birth rate and reverse the present trend. The first option, in addition to being likely to lead to severe internal unrest, can offer only limited relief —productivity is already relatively high and the East German system has, like those of its East bloc neighbors, failed to act as a springboard for modernization. Thus, the second alternative is now being put into practice.

The East German campaign to boost fertility affords a unique opportunity to examine a state's potential to succeed in such an effort. If a highly sophisticated totalitarian apparatus proves unequal to the task of halting an internal population decline, then it may well be

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argued that incentives to increase fertility are not likely to work anywhere.*

The demographic problem in East Germany has already had a major impact on world politics. The low birth rate has been only one cause of the population decline. The crucial factor during the first twelve years of the GDR's existence was emigration or, more accurately, mass exodus. When the GDR was established in 1949, there were about eighteen and a half million people in the Soviet Zone. More than two and a half million people, most of them young, many of them highly skilled, left the country before Walter Ulbricht's government, in "consultation" with Moscow, decided to risk a confrontation with the United States by closing off the Berlin escape route. By the time the East Germans "normalized the frontier"—i.e., built the Berlin Wall—in 1961, the total population was a million less than it had been in 1949. Already the rise in the relative number of old people had distorted the age pyramid, channelled an unexpectedly large proportion of the nation's "net material product" into pensions (almost a quarter of the population was over sixty, more than three times the comparable figure for the United States), and forced a lowering of production goals.

The Berlin Wall was also built to salvage East German currency: the open border in Berlin had all but destroyed the Ostmark, further undermining economic stability in the GDR. Soviet diplomatic strategy was, of course, an additional factor. But demographic realities were the primary impetus behind the decision to build the Berlin Wall, which stands as a telling symbol of the impact of population concerns on international events.

SEALING the border did eliminate the population leakage and the brain drain to the West. Thus it helped restore the working center of the age pyramid. East Germany's numbers problem, however, was far from over. In 1964 the GDR had a growth rate of 3.7 per thousand; by 1976 its population was declining by 2.4 per thousand, and there was no emigration upon which to blame this renewal of negative growth. Noting that the steady drop in the birth rate, which had begun in the 1950's, and which had brought the GDR's rate of natural increase below the breakeven point by the early 1970's, showed no sign of relenting, the East German government launched an elaborate, extensive, and costly program of social benefits for working mothers in a determined drive to raise the national population. (In 1974, eight out of every ten women of working age had a job—quite possibly the highest female labor-participation rate in the world.)

Certain incentives had already been introduced in 1972, the year legalization of abortion and provision of free contraceptive services caused the birth rate to plunge to an all-time low. Among these early benefits for child-bearing families was an outright grant of 1,000 marks (then $470) for each child. Interest-free loans, to allow young couples to buy furniture for their homes and provisions for their babies, were also introduced. The birth of a second child within an eight-year period reduced the family's debt to the state; three children in eight years and the slate was wiped clean. But it was apparent four years later that these measures were not going to reverse the decline. As a result, the program introduced in 1976 had to be of a different order. The GDR made a conscious decision to remove women from the labor force and have them bear children. The new program represented a decision to opt for an acute labor shortage in the immediate future in favor of the possibility of long-term growth.

The pronatalist effort involved a massive propaganda campaign calling for women to stay at home and bear children; paid leave after the birth of a child was extended from four months to six; the option of an additional year off (with pay) on top of the six months was made available to mothers of more than one child; job security for women availing themselves of this option was guaranteed; the work week for mothers of more than two children was reduced by four hours, or by nearly 10 per cent; the size of the outright grant for each child increased to over $500 (the state also paid a per-child maintenance fee to families, beginning at 240 marks per year for the first, increasing to 840 per year for the fifth); all working women (non-mothers also benefited) were granted one "household day off" from work per month. Guaranteed health care for mother and child was part of the package—the grants were not handed over until the child was brought to the clinic for its first checkup.

The new program is an incentive-oriented plan, and should be distinguished from measures that represent outright coercion. An example of the latter was provided in Rumania in 1966: the government in Bucharest banned abortion entirely, save for cases of rape, for women over forty-five, and for mothers of four or more children. Rumania also put a stop to the import of contraceptives and IUD's. Only briefly did the Rumanians achieve success in raising fertility: in the first year of the new program birth rates doubled, but as parents reverted to more traditional methods of contraception, the birth rate headed down to its previous level. The Rumanian experiment, moreover, seemed to cause more problems than it solved: the sudden bulge in the age pyramid meant that additional state funds had to be diverted for the building of extra grade schools which would only be used for a matter of years,

* Conversely, government efforts to raise birth rates in relatively developed totalitarian nations may shed light on the claims of many poor governments—which have neither the resources nor the instruments of control available to the states of Eastern Europe—that it has been their anti-natalist programs which have lowered their nations' fertility.

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preparation had to be made for a sudden surge in applicants to the job market, and so forth. The East Germans, studying the Rumanian failure, decided a decade later in favor of incentives over outright coercion, as did other Eastern European countries.

But there is still a coercive aspect to the East German program. The pressure on women to marry and fulfill their national responsibility by bearing children is intense—propaganda to this effect confronts young women in every facet of their lives.

WILL the pronatalist effort succeed? Preliminary results from 1977 and 1978 have been termed "spectacular" in the West. The birth rate per thousand was raised to 13.3 in 1977 from 10.8 in 1975. In absolute figures, 27,600 more babies were born in 1977 than in 1976. With more than 220,000 births in the first year of the program, Erich Honecker and other state officials confidently predicted the elimination of the labor shortage by the turn of the century. The "baby boom" continued into 1978. In the first quarter, for example, 5,000 more babies were born than during the same period in 1977.

Although it is difficult to make predictions on the basis of figures so preliminary, our assessment is that the East German program is likely to fail. The most that will result, in all likelihood, is a reduction in the age of marriage and a lower average age of women at the time of their first child. The sudden rise in birth rates does not mean that parents are actually planning to have more children—only that the incentives (and propaganda) have convinced them to have their children earlier. The length of generations should shrink slightly and temporarily, but the "bulge" produced by the sudden, and temporary, rise in fertility will probably have the same effect as in Rumania; it will strain state resources, and create social problems without effecting a significant long-term increase in the national population. Some families, but in all likelihood only a few, will decide actually to have an "extra" child as a result of the incentive program and coercive propaganda.

Contrary to the optimistic reports emanating from East Berlin, East Germany has not solved its demographic problem. Fertility, we believe, will soon begin again to fall off. The GDR will have done extremely well to have the same population in the year 2000 as in 1976. The lesson here is significant. Short of Nazi-style breeding programs (and even these were not particularly successful), states facing "depopulation," whether democratic, authoritarian, or totalitarian, have few effective instruments at their disposal to reverse the trend. In the specific case of East Germany, this means that economic slowdown, and perhaps even stagnation, becomes an increasingly likely prospect—all the more so, perhaps, as the government diverts needed funds to ineffective population-raising schemes. The implications of such a slowdown for the Warsaw Pact economic system, for the East German-Soviet relationship, and perhaps even for ties between the two Germanys, should not be underestimated.

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IV

ALTHOUGH press accounts generally use the words "Soviet" and "Russian" interchangeably, they are not synonyms. The Soviet Union controls an enormous stretch of terrain in which more than 100 peoples, ranging from Jews to Eskimos, live under the administration of a Russian-dominated political elite. In this last of the 19th-century-style empires, Russians make up just over half of the total population today. Other Slavic peoples, such as the Ukrainians and the Byelorussians, account for perhaps another fifth. But more than a sixth of the Soviet Union's 260 million-odd people are Muslims. Today their numbers are estimated to be over 40 million and perhaps as high as 50 million. This makes the Soviet Union the fifth largest Muslim nation in the world, behind only Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, and ahead of such nations as Turkey, Iran, and Egypt. This enormous and still growing Muslim contingent poses a serious threat to Moscow's ability to pursue its current policy of expansionism; indications are that Soviet Muslims will challenge the state with even greater problems in the years immediately ahead.

Like other European populations, the Slavs of the Soviet Union have been experiencing declining fertility since the 1950's; as a consequence, their rates of population growth have been declining continuously over the past generation. For almost two decades, moreover, the absolute number of Slavic babies born each year has been smaller than the year before. The Muslims, mainly Turkic peoples who live in a stretch from Turkey to China along the Soviet Union's southern border, have birth rates which are relatively high—at this point, more than twice as high as the Slavs'—and which have shown little sign of decline since the 1920's. In fact, due to their declining death rates, the rate of population growth for Muslims has actually been accelerating. The result of these trends, of course, has been to reduce the ratio of Russians to Muslims in the Soviet Union. In 1959, there were almost 5 Russians for every Muslim in the Soviet Union. By 1970, this ratio had dropped to just under 4 to 1. Today, the ratio is about 3 to 1. Even if Muslims begin having smaller families in the 1980's (a prospect which many experts in the field hold unlikely), it is quite conceivable that the ratio will have slipped below 2 to 1 by the turn of the century.

This shift in relative numbers sharply constrains Soviet power: first by actually limiting Soviet strength, but just as importantly by restricting Soviet ability to maneuver against other nations.

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The Soviet Union's numbers problem manifests itself both economically and militarily. Traditionally, the Soviet economy has been a tremendously inefficient operation. (To give but one example: despite the fact that the USSR invested more than six times as much in agriculture as the United States in the 1970's, the average American farmer today produces five to ten times as much as his Soviet counterpart.) Low worker morale as evidenced by high rates of alcoholism and absenteeism, a general lack of incentives, and a politically oriented "command" economy threatened inevitably by flexibility or initiative from the bottom, among other problems, have combined to make it extremely difficult to improve efficiency levels or raise overall productivity rates. Instead, the Soviet economy relies primarily upon amassing ever larger amounts of labor and capital to increase its output.

The current numbers problem places the Soviet economic strategy in jeopardy. The total annual increment to the Soviet labor force over the next fifteen years will be on average only about a fifth of what it was in the early 1970's. (This, we should emphasize, is not speculation or "projection"—the new workers of the 1990's have already been born; most of them, in fact, are already in school.) The productivity of these workers-to-be, moreover, quite possibly will be lower than in the past, for the composition of the Soviet labor force is rapidly changing. Over the 1980's the number of Slavic workers, who are relatively well-educated and skilled, will decline by two million. They will be replaced (though only on paper) by Muslim workers, who today are about half as productive as the Slavs.*

Muslim workers may become even less productive in the decades ahead. Due in large part to the ineptitude of the planners commanding the Soviet economy, a "labor surplus" has been emerging in the rural regions of such arid Central Asian provinces as Kirghizia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhistan. At the same time, resource-rich Western Siberia, which the government has been trying to develop for years, is beset by labor shortages. The government's plan has been to move the Muslims to jobs in Siberia; this does not square, however, with either the abilities or the desires of the Muslims themselves. To work outside one's own region, it is imperative to have command of the Soviet lingua franca, Russian. But according to the 1970 Soviet census, barely a fifth of Soviet Central Asia's youth have achieved mastery of Russian, and this proportion does not seem to be rising. Morale and discipline problems among transplanted Muslim workers have been so severe that the government has continued to move its now-diminishing population of Slavic workers to Siberia, thereby creating labor shortages in the European areas west of the Urals.

Labor problems have been a major reason that the Soviet economic growth rate is now officially put at 2 percent, the lowest since World War II. Some Western observers suggest that the Soviet Union may actually have entered the beginning of a long phase of *negative* economic growth. While it is too early to tell if this is in fact so, the prospects for prolonged zero rates of growth, and even for negative growth, will increase over the 1980's and 1990's as the numbers problem intensifies.

IF THE long-term strength of a nation depends upon its economic base, in both the short and the long run the ability to conduct foreign policy (or, as it were, "project" oneself abroad) requires a steady and secure military force. The drop in the number of Slavs and the sharp rise in the number of Muslims coming of military age already represents a serious problem for the Soviet military. The Soviet armed forces are the largest in the world; their current strength is believed to be in excess of four million. With a two-year service requirement, the Soviet military machine needs roughly two million youths a year to maintain itself. With the absolute number of young Soviets declining during the 1980's and 1990's, conscription quotas will become increasingly difficult to fulfill. By 1983, according to Murray Feshbach of the U.S. Bureau of the Census, it is quite possible that the Soviet armed forces will experience something akin to a labor shortage.

As with the Soviet economy, the change in the composition of the potential draftees would appear to be as troublesome as the change in the numbers available. Today roughly a fifth of the Soviet soldiers are of Muslim origin. By the end of the 1990's, as much as 35 percent of the Soviet armed forces may be Central Asians.

From a simple logistical standpoint, heavy reliance on Kirghiz, Azerbaijani, Kazakh, Tadzik, Uzbeck, Turkmen, and other Islamic soldiers creates problems. Draftees from Central Asia tend to be relatively poorly educated and not at all well-trained. It is not clear how effectively they can operate the sophisticated equipment and perform the complicated tasks which are required of a modern war machine. Since the overwhelming majority of these recruits have not mastered Russian, moreover, it may be difficult to coordinate, manage, or maintain large-scale operations.

With a large and irreducible proportion of its soldiers Muslims, the Red Army command would have more to worry about than routine logistical difficulties. A heavily Muslim army is not likely to be an ideal tool for military action against Islamic countries. It is interesting to note that in the assault on Afghanistan, a considerable number of the troops were transferees from Eastern Europe. The Soviets seemed less than anxious to send Mus-

* This is hardly a phenomenon of inherent indolence. Rather it speaks to a lack of education and training, and to the reluctance of a proud people to be linguistically and culturally coerced, or geographically transplanted.

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lim troops into action against their co-religionists.

Soviet expansionism in the subcontinent and in the Persian Gulf (which President Carter refers to as Southwest Asia) requires a Red Army prepared to battle with Muslims of all varieties. An increasingly Muslim military force could well prove an impediment to further expansion and consolidation, America's current foreign-policy malaise notwithstanding.

Indeed, this issue points to an even larger problem. The pan-Islamic tide sweeping across nations located near or against the Soviet border, like Iran and Pakistan, induces worry in the Russian elite in Moscow, particularly as the Muslim population inside the Soviet Union continues to grow. While Soviet Muslims have not, as yet, manifested any sense of solidarity with the pan-Islamic movement, this insular quiescence may not be permanent. More importantly, Muslim tranquility at home is a blessing Moscow must seek to preserve. The imposition of possibly repugnant military duties, or forced transplantation of families and communities, would seem a sure way to disturb this tranquility. Thus, even without evidence of an internal Islamic upsurge, the constraints on Soviet policy options remain real.

The rhetoric of Soviet foreign policy must also come into conflict with domestic concerns. Can the Soviet Union espouse the principle of national self-determination abroad and continue to subjugate national minorities within its own empire? True, the relationship between rhetoric and practice in Soviet policy has long been tenuous, to say the least. But in the present case, in view of the demographic transformation now in progress, the possibility of the Soviets being hoist by their own petard is more acute than ever before.

V

This survey of the impact of population numbers on world politics is intended merely to be suggestive. Paradoxically, the role of population in world affairs is at once both underestimated and exaggerated. Because population change is such an obvious and highly visible part of modern life, we frequently label as demographic events which have little or nothing to do with population numbers. The role of population, on the other hand, is often underestimated because we tend to think in terms of worldwide demographic trends and to ignore subtle, localized developments. It is clear enough that population affects a nation's strength. Less obvious are the constraints that demographic change imposes on a government's ability to maneuver, for these work themselves out through domestic channels, and often go undetected.

To take but one example: the cool reaction of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States to Egypt and Israel's peace settlement is arguably less a function of inflexibility on the part of medieval-minded Muslim aristocrats than a rational and clear-headed response to a very real numbers problem. The oil states have almost no trained manpower of their own. In fact, they have almost no manpower of any sort: although Saudi Arabia claims its population is over seven million, knowledgeable observers say it is nearer to three. As a consequence, in developing their deserts, the governments of the area have been obliged to contract massive amounts of foreign labor. Much of this has been Palestinian. Though seldom discussed, the relative magnitudes are staggering. In Kuwait, a majority of both the workforce and the total population is Palestinian, as are a majority of the army officers. In Bahrain, 75 percent of the population is either Palestinian or Shi'ite Muslim Yemenite; a high percentage of the latter identify strongly with the Palestinian cause. In the United Arab Emirates, the combined figure is 50 percent; in Qatar, 42 percent.

Numerous other cases in point could be cited. As the role of population in international politics continues to assert itself, the significance of this phenomenon will become increasingly apparent.

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Lesson for the Day

A Story

Richard Stern

KIEST, with lots of time on his hands—his wife had a job, he didn't—had fallen for—that is, couldn't wait to get in the sack with—Angela Deschay, a pie-eyed, soft-voiced long-legged, frizzily gorgeous assistant professor in his wife Dottie's department. Dottie and Angela were soaring together. It was WE—Woman's Era—in the universities. Every department had to account to Equal Opportunity Boards in the university and in Washington for its minority hiring practices. Humanities departments had long since run out of qualified blacks and Chicanos, the few in these fields were more precious than natural gas strikes, but there were still good supplies of women. "Not enough to have a representative or two," rumbled Kiest. "You have to represent the whole miserable spectrum, pouters, grinners, thumpers, grunts. And then you can't fire them. Fire a slit"—he'd borrowed that splendid term from the misogynist, Ty Cobb—"and you've got a fire on your hands. They get a new job Wednesday and sue you for the one they lost Tuesday. Lost purposely, so they can collect double."

The rumbling went on mostly to himself, at least to his three- and one-year-old sons who did not exactly tune in to it. It was just Dad going on. What else did he have to do? He'd been done out of his place by the world's women. In fact, it was Angela Deschay who filled the slot he'd have filled here in Madison. The slit in the slot. His lust for her had been blocked and then ignited by the injustice.

"What leg can a man stand on?" This to Dottie over the repulsive Cheerios he bought—of course he did the shopping—because she detested them. "The one in the middle? That's the one that does us in." Thin, bespectacled, mild, and innocent-looking despite his rage, Kiest threatened her with transsexual operations. On her, on himself. "I'll turn slit and give you a run for our money."

Would she even notice? She rushed off, she rushed in, flew to conferences, interviewed, was interviewed, formed and chaired committees, got job offers, salary raises. At this publication-insistent university, her only post-dissertation work was a bloody attack on her own dissertation adviser's swan-song book on George Herbert. (So veiled with fulsome praise that only Kiest and the victim knew what went on. Dottie herself didn't know. Her aggression was just hearty instructiveness. "He wouldn't respect me if I didn't point out a few things. He's the last man to want friendship to shackle scholarship.") The tigerish assault was pronounced "brilliant" by senior professors who otherwise couldn't justify Dottie's unstoppable rise.

Kiest foresaw their life: Dottie as chairperson, dean, provost, president; board directorships, a cabinet post, and who knows then? He would be Henry Lucing it after her—with the difference that Henry Luce had been Henry Luce whereas he had never been allowed to be more than just Kiest.

What had he done? Well, he'd written a dissertation on the great and terrible John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester. At graduate school, he'd done far better than Dottie. And yet, he could not find a job within a hundred miles of hers. She'd been wined, dined, grabbed for, prostrated before, you'd have thought she was a fusion of Madame Curie and Marilyn Monroe. She was only an enthusiast, a worker, a prettyish, big-bottomed, strait-laced, no, slightly unlaced girl out of the bleached Calvinism of Dutch Reform Michigan. They'd met at the Yale graduate school, drawn together in dislike of the critical virtuosi there. The literary pantheon at Yale didn't feature Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth but the versions of them offered by H. Miller, H. Bloom, G. Hartman, and S. Fish (whom Kiest rebaptized as Grinder, Wither, Thrombosis, and Carp). Each day, he and Dottie watched them lash, hash, and hack *Lear, Comus*, Browning, and Blake into puzzles of hamburger. "The texts we live and die by," said young Kiest. "And over in Romance, the Barthes-Derridà swine are fusion-bombing Balzac and Stendhal. Who'd dare to write a poem in New Haven?"

Not Kiest. It had never been his ambition. All he'd wanted was a chance to dig into the grand

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old texts. There were plenty of first-rate meals to be made out of those ingredients.

Dottie was saved by languages. At Olivet, she'd majored in classics; at Yale this was her redoubt, a pocket of antique resistance to the critical buzz-bombs. Fresh-faced, pop-eyes agleam with untouched availability, she wrote the thick, paratactic, unnecessary-to-read prose that was called wonderful writing in the academy.

He, Kiest, had come out of the Garden District of New Orleans with ever-thinning Southern speech. His father had been pastry chef at the Commodore Palace Hotel; he became an early observer, then a master of aristocratic ways. Adolescent, he found the bookstores in the Quarter, and by senior year was enough ahead of his classmates to win a fellowship—"they'll change it to 'pal-ship' "—to Tulane, and after that, a fatter one to Yale. Ascent was written all over him. Dottie, with innocent hunger, grabbed him. How could she know she'd grabbed a lemon?

Or did she? Had she known even then she'd need a Kiest at home for kids, for chores? He wasn't sure. He accused her of uni-sexing him; even then, she knew both the unimportance and the necessity of his complaints. She'd become one of the least passionate twenty-eight-year-olds in America, but, in complaint-time, she could slide into brilliant sexual parody, so that tumbling on her pale rear, or bouncing the rosy-nippled chest, complaint melted away. Being home so much did fierce things to the sexual appetite.

Which is how Angela Deschay filled his head.

THE Deschays lived across the grassy street. Angela too was a rising star, not in administration, but scholarship. She published complex articles on Revenge, Power-Hunger, Persiflage, and Dominance in Restoration Comedy. Before she'd come to Madison, she'd looked up Kiest's dissertation, thinking that the Kiest on the roster was Mervyn L., not Dorothy M. They were on the same intellectual frequency. Her husband, Jimmy, was in the Divinity School, one of the hip new preachers, full of pop cultural garbage spaced tediously by spiritous infusions of Barth and Bultmann, Troeltsch and Tillich. Eyeglassed, helpful, huge, eager, Jimmy was full of soft causes, soft politics, and frequent soft furies which exhausted, sometimes paralyzed him. "How could she have married him?" groaned Kiest to little Myron, Baby Dan. Madisonians—he knew—asked the same question about Dottie.

He and Angela walked their kids along the lake and talked about the 17th century, university politics, and, after a few awkward skirmishes, sex and marriage. She knew his views deeply, they were in his dissertation. Kiest spelled out his own failure in Rochester's. The bitter entertainer, pimp, and jester to the monstrous king was a rioter, hater, debauché, an actor and counterfeiter who disguised himself as tramp, porter, mountebank doctor. Hobbesian apostle and poet of Nothing, Rochester knew that the difference between con man and banker was that the banker's credit lasted one day longer, that coward and hero differed because the day the coward had to put up, the hero didn't. His couplets lashed everyone from crowned king to two-crown strumpet. Age thirty-three, burned out by japes, revels, punks, liquor, and disbelief, he was converted by Bishop Burnet, and died in the arms of wife, children, debts, and church.

Kiest, five years shy of Rochester's deathbed age, had had no king, only dream queens, no career of make believe, only a non-career of it. His debauches were oneiric. Home, after a spring-day stroll by the sail-white, passionate lake, he put the kids down for naps and took out the two-hundred-and-forty bound pages of his dissertation, *Rochester, The Burning Counterfeit.* Its harsh prose seemed beautiful to him, he mouthed the great Earl's poems. Angela's legs and breasts, her thick-glassed green eyes, mop of twiny, glittery, leafgold hair, her long back with—surely—its generous dip into the beauteous twins, oh what a woman.

> Naked she lay, claspt in my longing arms,
> I filled with love, and she all over charms,
> Both equally inspired with eager fire,
> Melting through kindness, flaming in desire.

For all her dutiful distance and careful amiability, Angela—he was sure—burned for him. She was the right age, the hot late twenties, and she'd seen around, through, and over her hefty, dull divine.

> With arms, legs, lips close clinging to embrace,
> She clips me to her breast, and sucks me to her face.

Angela, Jesus, Mary.

> The nimble tongue (love's lesser lightning) played
> Within my mouth, and to my thoughts conveyed
> Swift orders, that I should prepare to throw
> The all-dissolving thunderbolt below.

Kiest turned on the bed, piled pillows stiff with Sears's floral print into an Angelac body.

JIMMY DESCHAY was making his preaching debut. More final exam than ministerial vocative, but no matter, it was a large event, and the Kiests were asked to swell the congregation that was part of it. The sacred tryout was in the First Methodist Church of Springvale, twelve miles west of Madison, fifty feet off the Interstate. Kids had been bunched with a single baby-sitter. Kiest drove the Deschays' nine-year-old Dodge Dart, sitting beside Jimmy, whose terror dominated their silence. The preacher's hands were in and out of his hair, cut into shaggy bangs like Robespierre's. (Every few months, he adopted

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another antique, revolutionary style: pony-tailed like young Jefferson, curled like Bolivar.) His eye-sockets, lips, and chin-cleft dripped, cheekbones, forehead, and chocolate-kiss eyes shone with sweat and tears. The radiant April Sunday darkened in the harsh car. Dottie made talk but was shushed by the Lord's frightened bridegroom. Angela, bareheaded, jouncy in her orange-flower dress, tried comfort and was likewise shushed. Jimmy needed all lines clear for late words from on high.

"Is he trying to drum messages from his scalp?" thought Kiest, furious at Jimmy's contagious frenzy. "That great Vidal Sassoon in the sky? Damn sheepish shepherd."

In church, he sat between the ladies. What a position. Never, never had human appendages so moved him. Under the flocculent orange balls bent the superb, unstockinged, untanned legs of this scholarly charmer, this—please God—sluttish slit. They straightened for hymns, for prayers, up, down, arms, sides, raising and lowering hymnals, fifty, seventy small contacts. She knew, surely, the warmth he generated, the feel of his suit sleeve, the tensed communication of his arm. The holy place, the holy occasion covered the awareness with unthinkability. "But," thought Kiest, "she is thinking. She *knows*."

Rise up, oh men of God.
Have done with lesser things.

No music reader, Kiest fumbled toward the notes behind Dottie's authority, Angela's warble. Hymnals bounced to the thin tune, hymn-booked arms rocked, parted, touched. Down they sat, arms and sides sending and receiving.

"Here we go," thunder-whispered Dottie.

Jimmy was up, black-robed, huge. Sheets of light spread from the great windows over sixty worshippers. An electric moment. "Dear friends, the lesson for the day is Matthew 26: 23. 'And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.' "

"Mother Mary. Does the bastard know?"

Kiest's thought was not just his. Air spiked between his sleeve and the bare arm beside it. The power of words.

"God," said Dottie. "Something's wrong."

The ministerial tower tilted. From the top, vowels bassooned into each other: "Aarch, eeech, uuueeeshhh." Black wings rose, sank, rose; the left wiped the ministerial brow.

"Jimmy." Angela, hands fisted, sent useless strength his way. "Oh, please."

Whereupon, not God, but Kiest came to the rescue. Small and straight, he walked the little nave and joined the stunned divine. Jimmy's face, red as if strangled, widened fishily. "Mr. Deschay," said Kiest to the assembly, "rose against his doctor's warning from a sick bed in order to preach this morning. It's clear he shouldn't have. With his permission, and yours, I'll read his sermon for him."

The colors of humiliation and terror countered those of surprise, relief. Jimmy touched the shoulders of his substitute, then sent the flock those eloquent gestures which would in future decades be seen in the smaller congregations of southern North Dakota. Back in his seat, hands folded, he gave perfect attention, as if he were the benign appraiser of his rescuer.

Kiest looked at the typescript and gave it his fervent all. "Is this betrayal story the essence of Jesus' last Passover? I think not. Grand as the grand story is, deep as it touches our sense of fair play, the betrayal, necessary prelude to the great sacrifice, is not the ultimate meaning. No, dear friends." His eyes found the thick glass behind which were the astonished, excited, decision-taking green eyes of the stricken fledgling's wife. Rescued from her own sympathy and humiliation less by Kiest's stunning move than by the moronic complacence with which her bedmate accepted it, she showed in her look an invigorated sense of the author of *Rochester, The Burning Counterfeit.* And sure enough, pondering this new acquaintance, she heard clear substitution in the laborious text—lines from the wicked Earl's "Satire Against Mankind," surely never before or after heard from this pulpit:

Birds feed on birds, beasts on each other prey,
But savage Man alone does Man betray.
Pressed by necessity, *they* kill for food,
Man undoes Man to do himself no good. . . .
For fear he arms, and is of arms afraid;
From fear to fear successively betrayed.
Base fear the source whence his best passions came,
His boasted honor and his dear-bought fame. . . .
For which he takes such pains to be thought wise,
And screws his actions, in a forced disguise.

"So," said Kiest over nodding, scratching, shaking heads, "As Reverend Deschay tells us, the betrayal in the midst of the celebrating feast is the essential savagery of man which, in hours, Jesus will die to redeem. So, on this second Sunday after Easter, do not lose yourself in the savage ecstasy of spring—fine as it may be"—small, wild rustling below—"without remembering that amidst your feasting self the unredeemed beast trembles in readiness. And here Reverend Deschay bids you turn to Number 29 in the hymnal, 'There is a land of pure delight where saints immortal reign.' "

THAT evening, while Dottie was out with her Sunday play-reading group —playing Regina in *Another Part of the Forest*— Kiest put his sons to bed, and then, from his door sill, sent brainwaves of imploration across the forty feet of grass to Angela.

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Surely she'd managed to drug her preacher into sleep. The ass had covered his debacle with Kiest's excuse for it; so well had he mimicked chills and fever that he suffered them. The car ride back to Madison had been filled with his sniffles. Kiest and Angela had not looked at each other. That was the sign: she knew; he knew. What more was necessary? Knowledge embraced need, need the invitation to requital. *What was holding her back?*

Gold shadows thickened, purpled. A fat moon sat in the oaks. The lights burned at the Deschays, but that was all. Kiest's expectation became anxiety, then misery. Ten o'clock. He threw in the towel and headed for the armistice of bed.

The phone. "Mervyn," said Angela.

"Thank God."

"No, *you*. Thank *you*."

"All right, come thank me."

Crucial silence. "Papers."

Papers.

Of course. End of term for the full-time assistant professor. Wife, mother, assigner of papers, reader of exams, there was hardly time for sleep, let alone . . . *let alone.*

"I need, I want, I must." The unuttered conjugation of Kiest's hunger. He put what he could of it into "Angela."

"Yes, Mervyn." Slowly, tenderly. It was something. Then, probably faking, "Coming, Jimmy. Goodbye."

Coming, Jimmy. The counterfeiting slit.

Kiest went into the terrible spring night. The moon hung in it like an ulcer. *What to do?*

Headlights in the oaks, and a professorial Dodge pulled to the curb. Dottie. Hot and rosy with self-gratulation: "Bye-bye. Thanks, again. See you next time. Bye-bye."

Kiest slipped inside, doused the bedlight, took off his clothes under the blanket, closed his eyes.

"Asleep already, baby?"

"No longer."

"Sorry, lambie. Had to tell you. Zack said he'd do it at the Repertory if I'd play Regina." Off with the square slacks, the fuschia turtleneck. "If I didn't have to chair that Curriculum Revision." Into the bathroom, front and rear nakedly abounce, splash, scrub, towel and tinkle—she never closed the door—and back to the dark bed in her grim, dust-colored pj's. "What a day." The bedlight shriveled Kiest's eyelids. "Sorry, sweetie, I've got a Special Fields on Coleridge at nine. Won't take me long. 'Frost at Midnight.' "

"You said it."

"Want to hear?" A specialist in metrics who couldn't find an accent with a Saint Bernard, Dottie sometimes treated him to a reading.

Why not? The day had supplied everything else. Coleridge was the one romantic poet he understood from inside: idler, dreamer, opium-guzzler, fragment-heaper, a mothering father, isolated, sex-starved, pent up with the wrong woman, dying for another. "Read on."

But Dottie, racing, underlining, scribbling, was almost done and could only cap this day of counterfeit and despair with the final wintry lines: " ' . . . the secret ministry of frost/Shall hang them up in silent icicles/Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.' "

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From the Diary of a Softballer

Edward Grossman

Last Friday, when the sun was darting in and out of the blackish winter clouds and the infield was actually a slippery archipelago of mud left over from the storm that had swept Jerusalem the day before, an insufficient number of the usual personnel showed up. Having no choice, we drafted some of the kids from the neighborhood who usually hang around and stationed them in the empty positions—they were warm bodies, and they might even stop a ball.

Usually, using our persuasive powers and superior numbers, we push these local schoolboys with their honeycomb soccer ball off the field when we come to play softball, permitting them at most to retrieve fouls. Never do they give up the field graciously, or without an argument. But on this cold, wet, muddy Friday, we compromised. Our player-manager—the transplanted bank teller, born and bred in Atlanta, Georgia—pointed out to the little Israelis where they should stand, and told them, in Hebrew, what they should try to do if the ball happened to come their way. They just nodded as if they understood, but one of them protested, in English, "I know! I know! You don't have to tell me!"

A child of nine or ten, he was skinny, quick, awkward, eager. He was promising. His English was American, and yet it wasn't. He must have been the offspring of one of those rare Israelis who leave Israel for the Promised Land and then come back, but not before their children become willingly steeped in the non-exportable essences of the master culture.

I recognized myself in this kid.

He had learned the basic motion of throwing a ball correctly, with some velocity and precision, not elbow-first, weakly and erratically like a girl or a non-American athlete who can only propel a ball with his feet. When I was his age, the American throwing motion had become nearly natural for me, too.

I had worked on it for a thousand hours, first with my father, then with my American friends. My father was responsible for starting me off. It must have been as early as our first spring in the New World that he took me to H. Brine's in downtown Boston and had me pick out a bat, a glove, and a ball—he had already guessed somehow or been told that this sport could be his son's surest road to Americanization. The salesman demanded to know whether we were in the market for a hardball or a softball. This we didn't know, but hefting the two possibilities—the hardball in one palm, the softball in the other—my father suggested I choose the softball. We rode back to Dorchester on the MTA, I smacking the shiny round thing into the stiff, oversized glove, over and over, distending it, beginning to form a pocket that would soon become as unremarkable and necessary to me as my own hand.

Thereafter we spent not a few late afternoons in Franklin Park, near the zoo. I have the picture in my mind of my mother sitting on a bench, reading a French novel, while we play—or better, try to play—catch. My father, a continental European, and a Jew on top of it, wasn't adept at throwing or catching. I noticed that he couldn't quite decide whether the main object of it all wasn't in fact to protect himself against an approaching missile. But although I was soon throwing more accurately and catching more consistently than he was, he didn't chicken out or drop these sessions. On the contrary, he applauded me, calling over to my mother after I'd done something which, frankly, had surprised us both. She looked up and I pantomimed the deed for her.

When I finished with my father's services and went off to play with Americans, it was strictly on my own initiative, and not because he gave any sign of having had enough. But first, I had to see how the game was really played. I had to pick up the rules, which he couldn't teach me because he couldn't fathom them himself. I didn't have far to search on those summer days, made longer than in Jerusalem by daylight-saving time and the northern latitude. During these extended twilights the Slo-Pitch teams would compete on the crab-grassy diamonds of the park. They sported glossy satinized uniforms, American Legion posts and the Knights of Columbus sponsored them, and their brand of play was sharp and midway between serious and mock-serious. After outs the infielders would peg the ball smartly around the horn. By watching and listening to these firemen, cops, and mechanics, I began to gather what the game was about. My brain also sponged up that slangy stream of encouragement and disparagement that ran counterpoint to the stop-and-go action—"No stick in there, Big Mike!" and "How you fire!" constituted among my first hundred words in English.

Playing ball, or watching it being played, these Americans conveyed a feeling of solidarity that I seemed to remember the Jews showed with one another in Palestine, in Israel. Strangers talked to each other, exchanging remarks on the plays, on the players. My father, exercising his English, drew people out—spectators who called him "Doc" and "Mac." But although I

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could feel that this game which my father had taken pains to introduce me to was my new country's great common denominator, it wasn't easy for me to take the next step.

FEARFUL, speechless, alone, I'd gaze at the pick-up games of my own age group in a vacant lot near our apartment building. At first I watched from across the street, my glove impaled on my bat, afraid to come closer. Day after day the players ignored me—perhaps it was for the best, perhaps I was overreaching. But one day I crossed the street, and after a couple of innings during which I sat on a crate and was ignored again, the summons came. Directed there by the finger of a red-headed older kid, I found myself playing right field.

I didn't give such a poor account of myself, not on that day, and not on the days that followed. Most of my work was stopping grounders that got through the infield. This I did with my body as much as with my glove, and heaved the ball back energetically. "How you fire!" I would shout, still unsure exactly what to say or do, and when. High flies and line drives were another matter—there was no telling how I'd handle them. But out there on the field, a spectator no more, a foreigner, an outsider no more, the distinct possibility of making an error didn't bother me so much. I was already proud, already perfectionistic. I wanted badly to excel, to win at everything, even at this American game. Yet to be on the field, and make an error, to play and lose, was preferable to not playing at all. I saw that true-born Americans made errors too, and if they were called "Butterfingers!" it didn't kill them. I could feel for a certainty, now, that this game was a door I could walk through to naturalization. More than that, I could become good at it, and more than that even, I could come at moments to love it for itself, a pure love uncontingent on any social benefit. Especially I could be good at hitting—my growing nearsightedness notwithstanding—though it would take me longer to get the hang of hitting a pitched ball than to learn to catch and throw.

These kids could do things with a pitch that my father couldn't dream of. They could make it spin and dip, or accelerate across the plate after seeming to have slowed down. At first I swung at almost every pitch, and missed nearly as many. I must've cut a comic figure. Once, getting a piece of the ball, I fouled it off my toes, exposed and vulnerable in the Old World sandals that I still wore. I dropped my bat and hopped around in pain. "The fingers on my foot," I managed to explain to the Irishmen, there being no single word for toe in Hebrew. They laughed, not unkindly I thought, and through my grimace I laughed too, and for the time being was acceptable in their eyes.

After this all that remained was to become a Red Sox fan, and a worshipper at the shrine of Ted Williams.

I DON'T remember whether it was our first or second summer in America that my father took me to Fenway Park. I do remember, and vividly, how it was to arrive at the top of that gently up-sloping concrete ramp at Fenway where, suddenly, you come out of the musty shadows below the grandstand and face the field. Young as I was, I was already liable to see in similes, sometimes two at once, or one right after the other. So to climb that ramp and face the field was like going on holiday and climbing the last dune on the beach south of Tel Aviv, facing at last the impossible color and impossible expanse of the sea—all the more immense and lovely for a mountain-bound child from Jerusalem. Here at Fenway, the sea was grassy, it was green grass greener than green, stretching out flawlessly and becalmed to a kind of distant horizon that was formed by the scoreboard, the bleachers, and the outfield walls.

Or, Fenway Park was like something else altogether. It was like a meadow in the country, like the meadow we had had a picnic in near Longfellow's Country Inn. But here it was a meadow that was inexplicably and wonderfully enclosed by the iron girders and rusting patina of the city, the pillars and posts and erector-set geometry of the grandstands and bleachers where twenty- or thirty-thousand American city dwellers like myself were raising a reassuring hubbub.

What enchanted me—the similes, or the thing itself?

The Sox took the field. The crowd cheered, and I cheered too. They played the "Star Spangled Banner," and I stood with hand over heart, as I had learned to do in school. After the anthem, the crowd cheered again out of sheer good spirits, and sat down twenty- or thirty-thousand times. The game began. It resembled the Slo-Pitch games in Franklin Park, and yet it was nothing like them at all. The least of the differences was that the pitcher threw overhand. More impressive than that, the players performed prodigies that were beyond the powers of the Franklin Park amateurs. The pros scooped up terrific grounders and hauled in fly balls that could've arched one of those skyscrapers in New York the floors of which I had given up counting from the sidewalk after I reached fifty and got a crick in my neck. Yet while the crowd cheered these amazing plays, it didn't seem to be positively wowed by them—basically it seemed to take them for granted.

There was more to this game than I'd imagined.

The sides changed. I purchased a bag of Double-Jointed Red-Hot Peanuts for myself and my father out of my allowance. Casually I clarified for him what a base on balls was. He, I noticed, was already slightly bored. Though he could toss a ball around with me for hours without tiring of it, and he could find it amusing to chat with the onlookers at a Slo-Pitch game, to watch or listen to a Red Sox game for more than a few minutes tested his patience. And then something happened. A thrill of complete attention passed over the crowd, stirring it like a breeze. Things seemed at one and the same time to grow noisier and quieter as a tall figure with his back to us, the numeral 9 stitched on his dazzling white uniform, came to the plate. The public-address announcer said something that I couldn't quite hear for the noise. "Who's that?" I asked in Hebrew, and my

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father, looking down at number 9, answered that he didn't know.

I WAS only curious, that first time, watching this figure knocking the sod from his spikes, digging in, charging the air around him—there was no reason yet for me to have gooseflesh about Ted Williams, for the little hairs on the back of my neck to stand on end, for a kind of aura to seize me that would come over me during the next ten years whenever I was at Fenway, or listening to the radio, or viewing a game on TV, and Williams came to bat.

Appropriately, unluckily—inevitably?—he hit a homer the first time I saw him. Wiggling his hips, he strode into a pitch, and met it in the center of the arc described by his bat. Instantly thousands of people were on their feet, and then myself and my father, following the flight of the ball through the blue sky. It kept climbing, climbing steadily like the dove that never came back to the ark, and disappeared over the top of the right-field bleachers, near the Gruen clock. Deadpan, Williams made the tour of the bases behind the man he had driven in, while the crowd I was a living part of raised a joyous tumult.

I was well trapped.

But why the Red Sox? And why Williams?

Why not? The Red Sox were the exasperating darlings, the frustrating favorite sons of Boston, indeed of all New England. It's true that another major league team, the Braves, also made its home in Boston. The Braves, however, were unloved and virtually ignored—a few years after I arrived, they moved to Milwaukee, formalizing the fact that the Red Sox owned the region. The Red Sox had a grip on New Englanders who cared about such things that could only be compared, perhaps, to the claim that a somewhat similar, somewhat better team, the Brooklyn Dodgers, is said to have had on the souls of its fans at the same period. Like the Dodgers, the Red Sox were loved and groaned over, and like the Dodgers, they were oversupplied with stars. They had Bobby Doerr, Jim Piersall, Johnny Pesky, Walt Dropo, Mel Parnell, Ellis Kinder, Junior Stephens, the meteoric Clyde Vollmer, Vern Stephens, Dom DiMaggio, and Williams. Unlike the Dodgers, the Red Sox never once fulfilled their promise. Each spring, a national panel of sportswriters queried by the *Sporting News*—I was soon a subscriber—predicted that with such a line-up the Red Sox had to win the pennant and each September, during the last week, sometimes on the last day, of the season, after leading the league for months, the Red Sox would invariably be overtaken, usually by the Yankees.

The Red Sox were highly gifted losers.

HAVING been brought to Boston, and having been introduced to softball and baseball, it wasn't very surprising that I let my head be turned by the Red Sox. And since Williams was the team's star of stars, it isn't any wonder either, that I chose him in particular to adore. What was remarkable, perhaps, if not inexplicable, was the extent of my craziness, the intensity of my adoration and identification. Even for a Red Sox fan, I overdid it. Hunched like some medieval kabbalist, I pored over the standings and the schedule every day in the *Globe*, computing what the team had to do in order to protect its lead. All the statistical data on Williams I committed to memory, not only for the year in progress, but for all the years he had played in the majors, including the years before I was born. I made a great effort to tune in to every Red Sox game—for me to miss a broadcast was most unusual. TV then was only black-and-white, of course, and only the Red Sox home games, and these only on the weekends, were televised. But WNAC and the generous Narragansett Lager Beer Company presented all 154 games over the radio, home and away. It is these radio broadcasts I still remember now, especially the away night games.

If the Sox were on the road, and a night game was being relayed from another time zone—from St. Louis or Chicago or Detroit—I'd stay awake past midnight attending to Curt Gowdy's play-by-play through an earphone which I hooked up to my crystal set. As I lay in the darkness, my active inner eye would picture the details implied or neglected by Gowdy—the glow of the grass under the million-watt floodlights, the gray flannel that Boston wore away from home, the snouty faces in the crowd, the canopy of smoke hanging low in the humid Midwestern night. These imagined images made my rooting that much more passionate. How I wanted the Red Sox to win! But if they didn't beat the Browns, the White Sox, or the Tigers that night, I prayed that, at least, my idol would shine. Whatever the score, I'd be shaken by a spasm of expectation as the third batter in the Boston line-up was retired or reached base, and the unfriendly crowd in Busch Stadium, Comiskey Park, or Briggs Stadium stirred and murmured a thousand miles away.

"Here's Williams. . .," Gowdy said laconically.

More than once in every three at-bats, Williams delivered. When he did, I was filled with a deep, almost ecstatic satisfaction. When he didn't, I'd either wait faithfully for his next at-bat, or bitterly weep—it depended on the situation in the pennant race, on whether it was April, July, or September. At the end of September, the Red Sox, those losers, and Williams, that genius, dispersed. Fall and winter were thus dead seasons for me, a dead space I sought to fill with books. The Bruins and the Celtics, hockey and basketball and football, left me cold. I waited for February, that short, endless month during which I crossed off the days until spring training. Waiting for the planet to tilt toward the sun again, I fantasized. I coaxed a God I didn't believe in to let this be the season—the season when the Red Sox and Williams would make it.

They never did. Their annual September collapse, their failure in the clutch, I took as personally and as badly as possible—Williams, too, often let me down when it meant the most for the team. The Red Sox lost the pennant, and I wept. I took it like a Betar-Jerusalem soccer fan when Betar loses. Worse. I was angry, ravaged, inconsolable. With an inarticulate sound I re-

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jected my astonished and worried father's reminder that it was just a game.

YEARS later, when I presumably had gotten over Williams and the Red Sox, and begun to gain perspective, I would seriously ask myself if my life and character might have emerged differently, more happily, if the Sox had at least once won the pennant, or, alternatively, if my parents had stayed in New York and I'd become, of all things, a Yankee fan. But that was really an idle question. Taking the Red Sox and Williams to my heart—which they bruised—was natural for a kid in Boston, and more than that, it was fatefully right for me, because of what the team and Williams were. The Red Sox were the chosen who could never quite make it, could never quite cash promise in for achievement, and Williams was a genius, a proud perfectionist and individualist and not at all a happy man.

Consciously I modeled myself after him at the plate, and not so consciously off the field as well. I did it being pretty much in the dark about what I was really doing. I didn't know that my identification with the fortunes of a baseball team and with a pensive native slugger, my fantasies of growing up to be a professional baseball player and my moments of forgetfulness and tremendous pleasure on the ball field, were actually not uncommon disturbances among my kind, among dreamy immigrants or near-immigrants trying to prove to some examining magistrate that they were really men and native sons.

Forgetfulness and pleasure—yes, raised or debased to the level of metaphor, of principle. On some of those summer days on the ballfields and vacant lots in the various neighborhoods, towns, and states we lived in when I was between the age of six and sixteen, the world would temporarily take on aspects of balance, peace, and benevolence which, taken in sum, seemed to amount to the same as a guarantee of immortality. This too is familiar to readers and researchers—those who take an interest in that long-lasting phenomenon, American childhood—yet with all the reading I was doing, I didn't have any idea that my love for the famous athlete, and my moments of joy on the field, were already becoming minor themes in the culture and psychohistory of my foster country.

The victim of this disorder could play ball from breakfast to supper, dreaming with his eyes open that he and his hero were one. The North American sun would warm his bare shoulders and the sweet taste would well up in his mind of performing physically with effectiveness. At sunset, he'd bicycle home with his glove hanging from the handlebars, head home reluctantly yet prepared—unless there was a night game scheduled—to forget his hero and the game for a time and spend most of the night reading—and not the *Sporting News*, either. Tomorrow there'd be another game.

But did I ever write Williams a fan letter, did I ever wait for him at the gate at Fenway to ask for an autograph, did I ever so much as clip his photo from the newspaper and paste it on the wall? The fact is, I never did. I don't think I ever even considered it. The reason may be that my love for Williams was actually abstract, and that to give it such crude expression would have been unintellectual, uncool—like showing my sensual joy on the field too openly. "Play it cool!" might have been my motto during those ten years in question, during which I was actually playing it quite the opposite, playing and identifying feverishly, trying too hard for those forgetful moments, losing badly, storing up responses and habits of mind which it would take me more than another ten years to get over.

ONCE you've learned to take the game for more or other than it is, you can, with difficulty, get over it, but it's doubtful whether you can ever be completely cured. Twenty years later, back in Jerusalem where I started, I can play softball once a week, and take it pretty much for what it is. Yet even now the fugitive moments come when the pleasure I get or want is excessive and I have to remind myself that this is just a game. It's liable to happen particularly after I connect for a clean hit or handle a sharp grounder in the infield satisfactorily—events that don't occur more than two or three times per game. For all I know, I may look as awkward actually executing these plays as that ten-year-old Israeli-American-Israeli kid—who made me think of myself at his age—did when he caught a pop fly in last Friday's game. All he lacked to make the resemblance to me at ten complete was a pair of glasses on his nose. But the resemblance was eerie enough to move me.

Calling for it, he lifted his arms stiffly, he slipped in the mud, but he kept his footing, and he held on to the ball. Do I look anything as helplessly radiant as he did, after his nice play? I trust not. My urge, at any rate, was to warn him, to tell him, "Don't do it, kid! Don't take it so seriously! Don't do what I did!"

Wisely, I suppressed this urge. "Yeah!" I hollered instead. "Sign'm up!"

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Celebrating Defeat

Richard Grenier

IN *The Empire Strikes Back*, a continuation of the *Star Wars* saga, George Lucas has made an original movie: the first space fantasy heralding the demise of Western civilization. Originally aimed at an audience of twelve-year-olds (literally), the series—for such it has become—now shows unmistakable signs of aspirations to the deepest "relevance" and "significance," drawing its ideology, although this might surprise some of its viewers, straight from the radical utopianism of the 60's, widely thought to be quiescent.

In the opening scene of the original *Star Wars*, an imperial Death Star commanded by the Dark Lord of the Sith, Darth Vader himself, halts and boards in outer space a vessel carrying Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher). Leia somehow manages to be, at the same time, a princess of the royal family, a senator of a republic overthrown by the wicked Empire of which Darth Vader is a kind of shogun, and a leader of the rebel Alliance to Restore the Republic. She is the daughter of Bail Organa, Viceroy and First Chairman of the Alderaan System. Leia's claim to the appellation "royal," the quaintness of giving her the seemingly contradictory twin titles of princess and senator, and the problem of what a viceroy's daughter (retaining her royal title) is doing leading a rebellion to restore a republic are left zanily foggy. In any event, Vader takes Leia prisoner.

Meanwhile, on another planet, no less, our "farm-boy" hero, the young Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill), is tooling around in an outer-space equivalent of a beat-up old Chevy. Via some very human robot chums, Luke intercepts a holographic distress signal from Princess Leia to a certain Obi-Wan Kenobi, appealing to Kenobi to extricate her from her predicament and join the struggle against wicked Darth Vader. "Say, I wonder if he could be referring to old Ben Kenobi . . . who lives somewhere out on the fringe of the Western Dune Sea?" says Luke, and proceeds to the Western Dune Sea, where he promptly finds Alec Guinness, dressed in a cowl rather like that of a Christian monk, living a life of monastic asceticism.

In classical mythology, when the young hero encounters the essential mystery or problem at the heart of the tale, he conveniently finds close at hand a seer of some sort who both explains the problem to him and instructs him how to solve it. Ben Kenobi serves this traditional double function, filling in the young Luke on all he needs to know about the world and history, on who is good and who is bad. He informs Luke forthrightly that his father, like Kenobi himself, was a Jedi knight, who was betrayed and murdered by Darth Vader. (Unlike other elite military castes, from Praetorian Guards and Janissaries to Samurai and Ivan the Terrible's *Oprichniki*, all of whom served absolutist autocracies, the Jedi knights, curiously, are the defenders and custodians of *Star Wars*' ancient republic.) Kenobi gives Luke his father's "light-sword," the Jedi emblem he had been keeping for him (he knew he'd happen by some day), and Luke is off to do battle with Darth Vader.

Once Luke has teamed up with Han Solo (Harrison Ford), a World War II "hot-pilot" type who serves as an older-brother figure, the adventures of the two are, in essence, those of *The Rover Boys in Space*. There are ups and downs, setbacks, obstacles to overcome. But basically the story is of two red-blooded American boys, pure-hearted, valiant, sure of their values and the justice of their cause, who trounce the villain. At the film's climax Luke and Han Solo destroy the Empire's Death Star and apparently Darth Vader with it, and in the last scene they are decorated with medals by Leia, our republic's well-known royal princess.

The only element of the story that seriously clashes with traditional boys' adventure fiction is the character and personality of Princess Leia, whose dialogue seems to have been vetted by the National Organization for Women and whose personality would have chilled the blood of centuries of male "action" writers from Sir Thomas Malory to Ian Fleming. Whether Princess Leia's obstreperousness was introduced to increase *Star Wars*' appeal to young females, or to mollify the women's movement specifically, or Lucas's own wife, or perhaps even because Lucas has a personal weakness for obstreperous women, I do not know. But her character, plus the replacement of the devoted retainers of inferior race—a staple of an earlier age of adventure fiction—by Luke Skywalker's robots R2-D2 and C-3PO and Han Solo's "Wookie" Chewbacca (an ape-like creature of surprisingly high intelligence in that he can both pilot a rocket ship and repair electronic equipment) are *Star Wars*' only concessions to recent social developments. They are signs, however, of things to come.

BETWEEN *Stars Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, two things overtook George Lucas that had earlier overtaken his friend and mentor Francis Ford Coppola. He became

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intellectually more ambitious. And he became more "relevant," offering profound comment on the times in which we live.

It is noteworthy that the decade of the 70's, which saw network television scrub from its programming the last remote allusions to the high culture (studies having shown that uneducated audiences actively resented references to a culture they did not themselves possess), witnessed the further consolidation of the cinema as the most "intellectual" of the popular theatrical arts. Taken seriously by critics, thrown into the company of Picasso and Solzhenitsyn and Alban Berg by arts-section editors of major publications, American film-makers have had an increasing tendency to take themselves seriously as well, casting off the cloying conventions of the old "masscult" Hollywood and grappling with intellectually challenging material.

This has produced substantial numbers of American films of an artistic and dramatic sophistication unthinkable in the old Hollywood, whose upper reaches stopped fairly abruptly at Louisa May Alcott and Raymond Chandler. Sadly, it has also induced numerous successful film-makers of essentially popular gifts to embark on enterprises for which they are plainly not intellectually equipped. There is nothing that makes more ludicrous the whole last section of *Apocalypse Now* than Coppola's daft attempt to integrate into the Joseph Conrad story his own ill-grasped readings in Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and Jessie K. Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*. (So proud was Coppola of his newly acquired erudition that he even displayed copies of the books in the film itself—presumably to prove to a doubting world that he had read them.) With the cheers of the critics in his ears, with vast sums earned from earlier hits, Coppola, now his own producer, would hardly have been amenable to suggestions from lesser men that he was living beyond his intellectual means. Who was there to say him nay? So too with Lucas.

By and large *Star Wars* is a technically extremely accomplished rendition of the world of the adventure comic books of George Lucas's youth. (His first commercial success, *American Graffiti*, was a celebration of his own adolescence.) But with *Star Wars* the biggest financial hit in movie history (at least in inflated dollars), Lucas was now out in the adult world of big money, and a hit this big called inexorably for a sequel. How to extend the story in time? The first segment had almost taken form of itself. The Princess in Distress. The bad Darth Vader. The seer Ben Kenobi explaining the perilous situation to young Luke (Lucas?) and telling him what to do. Luke doing it. The story had been told so many times that Lucas, unassumingly, considered the film more of a composite than anything else.

But now what? Unable to resist the impulse to "upgrade" his work intellectually, what Lucas did, of course, was to give himself a crash course in mythology, anthropology, and psychology, reading ancient myth, classical epics, folk tales, the Arthurian cycle, *chansons de geste*, tales of all the ancient heroes, mythic or legendary, throwing in lumps (no doubt from secondary sources) of *Paradise Lost, Suhrab and Rustam*, Freud, Jung, Yoga, Zen (California school), drawing from what the press manual for *The Empire Strikes Back* calls a rich "miasma" of cultural sources.

Lucas claims that well before making *Star Wars* he wrote a series of nine sequential movie treatments (synopses) covering the whole *Star Wars* cycle, of which he felt most "secure" with Part IV, or the first section of the Second Trilogy. This he consequently made first as *Star Wars*. (In this age of cultural inflation, even a vulgar twenty-four part television series might some day be referred to as "eight trilogies," or perhaps "six tetralogies.") Unfortunately, the press material now being handed out on the First Trilogy no longer jibes with the *Star Wars* prologue. And, more grave, at least one conspicuous element of *The Empire Strikes Back* no longer even jibes with the main body of the earlier film.

Star Wars tells us quite unequivocally that Luke's father was a Jedi knight betrayed and killed by Darth Vader. But in *The Empire Strikes Back* we learn to our astonishment that Luke's father was not killed by Darth Vader at all and is still alive. In fact, he *is* Darth Vader. This is the Dark Secret that critics are enjoined not to reveal to their readers. I am not certain how great a thrill is felt by the audience when it receives this information, but I have a suspicion of how thrilled George Lucas was when the new concept burst upon him. What vistas it opens: Zeus and Cronus! Oedipus and Laius! The stirring prospect of generational conflict!

I HAVE unearthed the tape of a curious unpublished interview Lucas gave before the release of *Star Wars* and in which, modest and unaffected, he makes no bones about his intended audience. *Star Wars* is "something for kids"—specifically twelve-year-olds. It is not science fiction and not about the future, but his attempt to do a "young person's adventure film" providing a "wholesome fantasy life like we used to have when we were kids." He lists the favorites of his childhood, the spirit of which he has attempted to capture, condensing them all in one film: Westerns, pirate movies, *Gunga Din, Treasure Island, Flash Gordon, Robin Hood,* King Arthur, the Walt Disney "classics," early John Wayne, the *Odyssey*.

On the tape Lucas chats freely about three earlier *Star Wars* scripts he had written before choosing to make the fourth into the final film. He talks of his hope of sequels if *Star Wars* is successful, which would keep him going financially while he indulged his penchant for "little, tiny, experimental movies." "My directing tendencies are so radical. They're not commercial," he says. It is odd to hear Lucas—whose earlier success with *American Graffiti* even surprised him—say in his shy voice: "*Graffiti* was as successful as I could ever hope a movie of mine to be. I don't think anything I'll ever do could be more successful than that." This, from the man who had just finished *Star Wars*, whose dollar earnings were in weeks to rocket it past every other motion picture ever made.

It is not widely known that Lucas, before *Star Wars*, worked

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four years on the *Apocalypse Now* project and was never able to raise the financing, finally turning it over in despair to his friend Coppola, who could. The world will never know what George Lucas would have done with *Apocalypse Now*; he says his version would have been "angry" and "esoteric," a kind of *"Dr. Strangelove in Vietnam."* But monied tyrants deemed that Lucas should make "this movie for kids." (The history of the cinema is replete with stories of this sort, Coppola himself having been dragged with some reluctance into *The Godfather*—generally considered his best film—because he needed the money.) But if Lucas was denied his chance to indict the U.S. for the Vietnam war, the success of *Star Wars* gave him the opportunity to make up for it in a new and unexpected form.

THE original *Star Wars*, to stress the point again, is boys' fiction of a perfectly conventional and traditional sort. Although set in an exotic locale (outer space), it contains an endless string of feats of intrepid derring-do by our boyman heroes and ends with their smashing victory overy villainy and their adversaries. There is no questioning, no casting about for "new values." The old ones are good enough for them. By contrast, *The Empire Strikes Back* consists of an extensive series of defeats, disasters, humiliations, almost as if our heroes were being punished for the sin of pride (or cultural arrogance) they displayed in *Star Wars*.

The reversals, in fact, are well under way even before *The Empire Strikes Back* starts, and the new movie opens with the leaders of our rebel Alliance to Restore the Republic very much down on their luck, holed up in a hideout on the ice-planet Hoth (actually shot in Norway). In the first scene, Luke Skywalker is mauled by an abominable Hoth snowman. But trouble begins in earnest when the Empire, having spotted the rebel hideaway via space probes, sends out an expeditionary force consisting of a squadron of giant, death-belching tanks that walk like enormous camels. In the debacle that follows the destruction of their Hoth hideaway, the friends split up, and one of the tedious things about *The Empire Strikes Back* is that from this point on it keeps cutting back and forth between two separate stories, which are never fully reentwined even at the end of the picture.

Princess-Senator Leia, pilot Han Solo, his Wookie Chewbacca, and C-3PO (the walking robot with an English accent) set off in the Millennium Falcon, their beat-up intergalactic Buick. They are rather swiftly trapped and captured by Darth Vader, C-3PO is dismantled for scrap, and Han Solo is put into "carbon freeze," a kind of suspended animation, in which state he remains suspended indeed, in a stunning non-climax, as the final credits crawl up the screen.

MEANWHILE, Luke Skywalker—accompanied by R2-D2 (the wheeled robot that beeps)—has been having experiences of a far more significant nature. A holographic vision of Alec Guinness sends Luke, in his dark night of the soul, off to apprentice himself to an Oriental-style guru named Yoda on the planet Dagobah, which for variety is all tropical swamp. Now in *Star Wars* Ben Kenobi, dressed in his monk-like cowl, could for all the futurist rigamarole and Japanese-sounding name have almost been a knight of the monastic Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, the so-called Knights of Malta, sworn to defend Christian Europe against the infidel Saracen or Turk. Yoda, however, is another matter.

The actual Yoda (yoga?), in fact a 26-inch Muppet manipulated by the same man who does Miss Piggy, puts Luke on an idiot's version of an Oriental mystic discipline. Yoda's Orientalism is only Muppet-skin deep, his basic belief system being a lot less close to the sound of one hand clapping than it is to *The Little Engine That Could*. But even the most ignorant members of the audience (in fact, especially the ignorant members of the audience) are plainly intended to see that Luke is reaching outside his corpus of traditional (Western) belief for some new, mystical, "Oriental" understanding of the universe. At the start of his training Yoda says of Luke to the holographic Alec Guinness, "I cannot instruct him. The boy has no patience. . . . All his life has he looked away—to the horizon, to the sky, to the future. . . . Adventure, excitement. A Jedi craves not these things."

The absurdity of applying such admonishments to the hero of a futurist comic-book series hardly needs stating, but it is worth noting that Irvin Kershner, whom Lucas delegated to direct this installment of the series, is an adept of Zen and has had what the parapsychology crowd calls "out of body" experiences, while Lucas himself, it turns out, subscribes to a rich array of occultist beliefs, literally believing in, of all things, *Star Wars'* "The Force." "If you use [The Force] well," he says solemnly, "you can see the future and the past. You can sort of read minds and you can levitate and use that whole netherworld of psychic energy." Lucas humbly admits he cannot yet do any of these exhilarating things personally, but it is evident that we are dealing here with a card-carrying member of the occultist subculture.

Warned by Yoda that he is not yet ready, that his training is not yet complete, Luke Skywalker nonetheless sets forth to do battle with Darth Vader. We are treated to a long *Three Musketeers*-like duel with light-swords, in the time-out moments of which Vader alternately taunts Luke ("You're not a Jedi yet!") and, Mephistopheles-like, tempts him to join the Forces of Darkness. Luke remains uncorrupted, however, continues the sword fight, and is soundly defeated by Vader, who strikes off his right hand, his symbolic sword arm, and again tempts Luke to join him. It is only when Luke refuses that Vader reveals that he is his father. "Join me and together we will rule the galaxy as father and son!" he appeals to him majestically. "Never!" cries Luke and—death before dishonor—casts himself into the void.

A suicide attempt by a comic-book hero is another first. But Luke doesn't really die, of course. He catches onto an external weather vane of the space station and, not seeming to lose any blood to speak

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of from his severed arm, happily breathes the non-air of intergalactic space until the Millennium Falcon, receiving an SOS via ESP, nips by to rescue him. With a new sword arm for Luke hitched on by futuristic surgeons aboard the rebel flagship, conveniently cruising in the vicinity, we arrive at a thumping non-ending.

In the final scene, half of our little group of lovable subhumans and intergalactic adolescents sets off to free Han Solo from his state of carbon freeze, while the other half waves them goodbye over an almost visible "To Be Continued." It is a most extraordinary conclusion to a piece of popular entertainment, with the heroes still all in dire straits, and the villain not only winning, but way out in front.

THE obvious defense for this non-ending is that the *Star Wars* films have been converted from a "series" (in which every episode is self-contained) to a "serial" (each segment merely an installment, with conflicts unresolved). But the concept of a movie serial to be made over a projected time span of some twenty-seven years (at the present rate of production) is in itself rather stunning, suggesting that Lucas has fallen victim to lurking delusions of grandeur. Personally quiet and self-effacing, he has nonetheless admitted, "*The Empire* is as complicated as any movie, and it says a lot of things," adding only, "But I don't like to come out with a big sign and say, *This is significant.*" It doesn't seem to have occurred to him that when he undertakes a gargantuan epic blatantly plucking themes from classical mythology and some of the greatest works of world literature he is doing just that.

Lucas, moreover, has given out that, if he identified in *Star Wars* with Luke Skywalker, in *The Empire Strikes Back* he identifies with our Muppet mystic, Yoda. This bodes ill for the ideology of the rest of the serial, at least of the concluding episode of the current trilogy. For in the opening sequences of the episode Luke is doomed to return for a graduate course in Yoda's brand of Dale Carnegie mysticism. With his parchment in his pocket, as it were, Luke will battle once again with Darth Vader, a combat from which Lucas has promised all interviewers that "only one will walk away." The betting, obviously, is favoring Luke heavily. Those confident of his eventual triumph assume that in *The Empire Strikes Back* Luke is passing through the time of testing and trials faced by all mythic heroes as they confront demons, monsters, magicians, the dark forces of the cosmos, as well as those within themselves, a contest from which Luke, like them, will emerge victorious.

But I am not so sure. During a scene in *The Empire Strikes Back* in which Ben Kenobi says to Yoda, "The boy [Luke] is our last hope," my ear was caught by Yoda's cryptic answer: "No. There is another." My sense of George Lucas's thinking is that Luke—the old Luke, that combination of Rover Boy, Captain Marvel, and Mr. America—can no longer be allowed to triumph in the old gung-ho, self-justifying way. To win, if he is to win, he must be transformed into someone representative of George Lucas's own, superior ideals. If I were to take a wild flyer at plotting for this increasingly meaning-laden space fantasy, I might guess that Darth Vader will conquer Luke, but that Luke will be discovered to have a "purer" twin brother (the bad self and the good self), or conceivably even son (who could play Galahad to his Lancelot).

In any case, whoever triumphs, Lucas's heavy emphasis on the "Oriental" wisdom of Yoda leads me to doubt very much that the victory will be shown as one for "our side." If Yoda is the key—and everything indicates that he is—*Star Wars*' way ahead for humankind will be founded on the Four Pillars of the Lucas world: (1) superficial Orientalism; (2) profound occultism; (3) pop Freudianism; and (4) a hodgepodge of "anti-materialist" pieties salvaged from the detritus of the counterculture.

To give a balanced view, I should point out that some intellectual analysts have hailed with enthusiasm the greater complexity of *The Empire Strikes Back*, Lucas's jettisoning of the simple black-and-white ethics of his earlier picture, and Luke Skywalker's "internalization" of evil. Dr. Weyler Greene, a Los Angeles Jungian psychologist, feels a clean break between good and evil may not be something we want our children to learn these days. "Can we afford this kind of purity?" he asks. "In *Star Wars* they were able to go in—bombs away—and be successful. In this one, that approach no longer works. That's what's wrong with America in this Iranian situation. We want to operate in a traditional, rational, strong-guy hero way, and somehow it doesn't work any more."

The only comment called for here is that the reason the traditional, rational way doesn't work any more might be that so many Americans have been going about "internalizing evil," like Dr. Greene and George Lucas, and that perhaps a Jungian might not be a very good choice for Secretary of State. Dr. Greene and I plainly saw the same movie, however. We merely feel differently about where it leads us.

LET there be no mistake. George Lucas has real gifts. He is a superb film craftsman, and, although *The Empire Strikes Back* was directed by Kershner and its full screenplay was fleshed out by Lawrence Kasdan and the late Leigh Brackett, the whole concept was Lucas's, he reviewed the production footage day by day, and his mark is on it.* Lucas is also far too modest when he describes the original *Star Wars* as merely a "composite." He is remarkably fertile in the invention of those near-human doll characters

* *The Empire Strikes Back* is a particularly obvious example of the falsity—at least in America—of the currently wildly popular notion that the director is the "author" of a film. Although Lucas has courteously affirmed, "It's Kershner's movie," Irving Kershner is hardly more the author of *The Empire Strikes Back* than Elia Kazan is the author of *A Streetcar Named Desire* which he directed on Broadway. American movies are group undertakings made under the leadership of whoever has effective control. Great battles have been fought for artistic control of a film, but not in this case. *The Empire Strikes Back* was completely under the control of George Lucas.

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on which the appeal of a certain kind of children's fiction so much depends; his creations equal or surpass the Tin Man, Scarecrow, and Cowardly Lion of L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz* and that whimsical bunch of familiars surrounding Christopher Robin in A.A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh*. Lucas's Droids R2-D2 and C-3PO and the Wookie Chewbacca, along with the magical suprahuman adversaries Ben Kenobi and Darth Vader, are far more responsible for the vast success of *Star Wars* than the movie's nominal central characters, Luke, Han Solo, and Princess Leia.

In *The Empire Strikes Back* Lucas seems to be at the top of his form in this department. At this writing, Amy Carter, the President's twelve-year-old daughter, has already been allowed to see the new movie twice, and her favorite is Yoda. "I just loved him and the way his ears wiggled!" she says. Indeed, the comradeship of Droids, Wookies, Muppets, and other such is one of the real *trouvailles* of the *Stars Wars* movies, replacing such fixtures of earlier generations as Gunga Din, Nigger Jim, and Robinson Crusoe's Man Friday. Relationships of this sort are now unacceptable to our modern notions of social equality (though they offer deep pleasure and comfort to the mind of the child). Change Gunga Din into R2-D2, however, and the proprieties are preserved.

IT ONLY remains to explain how it is that George Lucas, who just a few short years ago thought "wholesome" fantasies for children were Westerns, and pirate movies, and the warlike knights of the Round Table, and military tales by Kipling, and Classic Comics—all representing rather extreme patterns of aggressivity and cultural assertiveness—should, when given his head on his own epic, suddenly find such models unwholesome, apparently preferring to inculcate a quietism aimed at undermining them. The question is critical, and the answer clear-cut.

George Lucas lives in the dream world of the child, where the relationship of action to consequence is fuzzy at best—a state of impaired perception widespread in the so-called counterculture. Lucas, in fact, is the counterculture in a nutshell, a charter member of that extraordinary "youth" generation which took absolutely for granted all the affluence and freedoms which came its way so effortlessly, and wanted not less, as it claimed, but more. In addition to effortless ease it wanted moral superiority, admiration, power. It is ironic, now that so many of the radical and revolutionary leaders of the 60's and early 70's have scampered back into the political mainstream, that their attitudes are now being voiced by a True Child, in what is after all the appropriate medium of a children's story. Many have fallen away, but Lucas, with his particularly intimate feeling for the joys and longings of the juvenile mind, is still engaged in the vast enterprise of proving that the world of the child is superior to the world of the adult.

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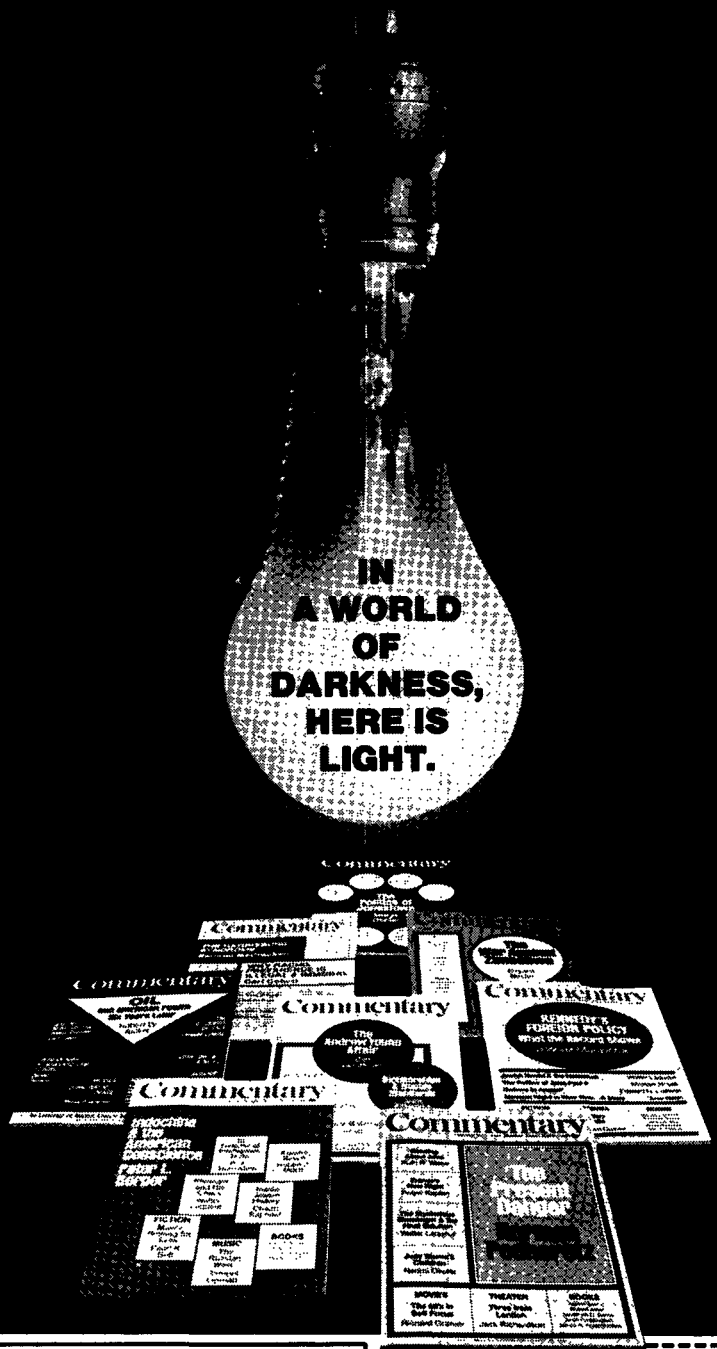

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Books in Review

Hindsight

THE REAL WAR. By RICHARD M. NIXON. *Warner Books. 320 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by CHARLES HORNER

THERE is a growing retrospective tolerance, if not yet a genuine nostalgia, for the Presidency of Richard Nixon. The interim Presidency of Gerald Ford and the dangerously weak Presidency of Jimmy Carter have contributed even more to this than the mere passage of time. Carter in particular has helped give "goodness" in the political man a bad name; Nixon was no saint, it is now said, but at least he was decisive.

The publication of Nixon's new book follows upon the appearance of *White House Years*, in which Henry Kissinger reflected some of his own brilliance on his commander-in-chief while still leaving him in the shadows. And it coincides with the appearance of the memoirs of Spiro Agnew and G. Gordon Liddy, shades from the Nixonian netherworld who have reappeared to trouble us and to revive old controversies. Now the former President seems determined to step forward in his own right, out of the images his diverse protégés—and even his own previous memoirs—have projected.

The Real War, however, does not provide a sharper resolution; the haziness is still there. We know the supporting cast of characters, and Richard Nixon made stars of them all. Men of genuine ability and intellect—Kissinger, Moynihan, Schlesinger, Burns, Shultz, others—formed an impressive government. Capable men, they were made by Nixon, if not better, at least more honored and influential; he gave them their chance, and they performed. But Nixon also had the ability to elevate men of no particular distinction or talent. He gave them the opportunity to become even worse and they took it, destroying his administration in the process. It seems that something in him responds to both groups, and so does *The Real War*. At one moment the book incorporates Kissingerian high politics; at another it draws on the phrasemaking abilities of John Mitchell to describe Saudi Arabia as "the big enchilada."

For all this, however, it is important that the argument of *The Real War* be kept separate from the author. Nixon may lack "style," but that, by itself, is hardly a refutation of his contentions. And despite the controversy that hovers over him as an individual, he has retained a certain authority in the ongoing discussion of international affairs. Though the book is surely about Richard Nixon, it is also about the world, a more urgent subject by far.

"We are at war," Nixon writes. "We are engaged in a titanic struggle in which the fates of nations are being decided." It is a protracted war, World War III as Nixon frequently refers to it, and it is total and global. In part a strategic contest, in part a struggle between diametrically opposed world visions, it has been under way since the closing days of World War II, and it pits the Soviet Union against the rest of the world.

In Nixon's view, the anti-Soviet coalition, of which the United States is the natural and necessary leader, enjoys tremendous advantages in this war—at least on paper. The democracies are richer, more innovative, more appealing to would-be neutrals, more naturally confident, more in command of the loyalty of their own people. They have the further advantage of having China, the world's most populous totalitarian state, on their side.

Why then is the Soviet Union winning? Because there is, according to Nixon, a fundamental defect in the character of the West in general and of the United States in particular—an absence of will. The general refusal of the Western world to perceive the danger facing it derives from its attachment to its material comforts and from its deracinated intelligentsia, unable to distinguish between the brutal facts of Soviet totalitarianism and the elevated rhetoric which the Soviet Union uses to hide them.

Nixon defines a Soviet strategic design not so very different from that set forth in Richard Pipes's recent analysis, "Soviet Global Strategy" (COMMENTARY, April 1980). Military power, economic warfare, propaganda, and the "black arts" are all coordinated in the service of Soviet policy. At the moment, the principal focus of Soviet strategy is the Persian Gulf, which holds the key to political ascendancy at least over Western Europe and Japan and probably over North America as well. Within this framework, Nixon discusses the deteriorating military balance, our relations with allies, the proper use of American presidential power, and the appropriate conduct of diplomacy generally. Overall, the analysis is convincing, in no small measure because the trend of events in recent years, especially the acceleration in Soviet expansionism, confirms it.

NIXON says that he has held to this analytical view ever since he entered public life about thirty-five years ago. As President, he had a unique opportunity to translate theory into practice, an effort in which he was aided by Henry Kissinger. In the cases of both men, it is now possible to examine the theoretical formulations which have appeared after the fact, perhaps by necessity, and to test them against the historical record. Inevitably, their post-hoc explanations of what they were "really" doing while in office seem to have improved with time and reflection.

Nixon's case is the more interesting. The former President's rhetoric today is markedly different from that which he employed while in office. The "new Nixon" of 1968 would hardly have offered his views of the world in the hard-bitten

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prose of *The Real War*. Indeed, this may well be one of the burdens which high office imposes. But there is more than a little in the book which is surely disingenuous, despite all the day-to-day problems a chief executive must overcome.

Consider, for example, one of the main dangers Nixon cites—our vulnerability to upheavals in the Persian Gulf, our dependence on foreign energy, the power of OPEC. Nixon portrays his administration's response to the 1973 Middle East war as in keeping with his general view. Yet the successes of OPEC since that time are surely attributable to the pathetic reaction of the Nixon administration to the first assertion of OPEC power. The supine rhetoric and even weaker diplomacy of the Nixon administration in the spring of 1974 must be reckoned a failure of historic proportions. In this, it is not so very different from that of the Eisenhower administration (which Nixon admires)—the administration that in its abandonment of Britain, France, and Israel in 1956 began the process which culminated in the Western world's surrender to OPEC in 1974.

There is, to choose another example, Nixon's characterization of certain American businessmen as soft-headed in expecting commercial benefit from the Russians while ignoring Soviet strategic goals in East-West trade. But again, it was the Nixon administration that was prepared to lend billions of dollars in subsidized credit to the Soviets and transfer very sophisticated technology in the bargain. In those days, it was not soft-headed businessmen who were the objects of Nixon's wrath, but Senator Henry M. Jackson, the indefatigable foe of this short-sighted policy.

Again, Nixon now shows strong support for the ideological struggle as a feature of the "real war" between East and West. In his time in office, however, strong Western support for human rights inside the Soviet Union was seen as a noisome impediment to America's "quiet diplomacy."

That the Nixon administration's approach to SALT was directed by a seriously flawed strategic doctrine has been acknowledged even by Henry Kissinger. He now has discovered that there is such a thing as strategic superiority, a concept scorned by the negotiators who signed the SALT I pact. Even so, Nixon defends his SALT I agreement, attributing subsequent difficulties to Congress, Carter, and others. The fact, however, is that Nixon's management of the enterprise was defective from the beginning. As early as 1970 Nixon had more realistic assessments in hand, but he ignored them.

The former President speaks approvingly of the "Nixon Doctrine," presenting it in this volume as if it were nothing but an argument for military sales to friendly governments. It was no such thing, but rather a doctrine which accepted the retreat of American power as an irreversible fact and which attempted to build up surrogates as a replacement for it. In its effort to preserve American power on the cheap, it is again reminiscent of Eisenhower's time, when the comparatively low cost of nuclear weapons allowed them to become a substitute for a real army. The vacuum in the Persian Gulf, which Nixon rightly calls to our attention, is not unrelated to this approach to strategic problems.

Finally, it is useful to recall the general problem of American rhetoric and American foreign policy. Nixon makes the case that the détente policy of the administration was misunderstood. Surely this too is disingenuous. It was, after all, President Nixon who approved a joint statement of principles at the 1972 Moscow summit which, among other things, incorporated phrases from the Leninist lexicon.

It is, in many respects, the policies of the Carter administration which have given to the Nixon era a remembered gloss of firmness and resolution. And, in truth, the coherence and consistency of the Nixon foreign policy, compared with that of today, can well be celebrated as a golden age. But there is more to vindication than the palpable incompetence of one's successors.

Indeed, the publishing successes of both the former President and his Secretary of State obscure important points. These authentic "inside accounts," for all their presumed revelations, merely serve to rewrite the past and to make the current debate even murkier. Nixon and Kissinger now sound like some of their critics of a decade ago, but neither acknowledges the full force of the arguments that were made then. They write as if no alternatives were possible, even though there were many who maintained at the time that the seeds of our current predicament were being planted. Inevitably, those who displayed the real foresight have been neither lionized nor enriched for getting it straight.

Muslims & Reform

MILITANT ISLAM. By GODFREY H. JANSEN. *Harper & Row. 224 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by DANIEL PIPES

ISLAM, like Judaism, is both a faith and a way of life, and as with Judaism, the way of life has in recent times been severely reduced by the pressures and allure of modernity. In both religions, an orthodox minority clings to the traditional way of life, making as few changes as possible; others give it up altogether; and in between, still others attempt to reform it and reconcile it with the requirements of modern living.

For no apparent reason, Godfrey H. Jansen refers to the efforts of the last-named group, the Muslim reformers, as "militant Islam"; most of this book analyzes the consequences of their "willingness to rethink Islam in modern terms." Accordingly, its title notwithstanding, *Militant Islam* ignores Muslim military efforts (such as those under way in Afghanistan and the Philippines); the fundamentalist Islamic movement led by the Ayatollah Khomeini; extremist groups (strongest in Egypt, Turkey, and Indonesia); and the recent attempt by Muslim leaders to mold the Muslim world into a bloc. Jansen dwells instead on the

> sincere attempt by leaders, some of them men of religion, some of

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them religious laymen for whom religion is a living, vital faith, to remodel their public and private life—politics, economics, law, social mores—according to the precepts of their faith.

Before dealing with reform Islam today, Jansen takes up two preliminary subjects, the religion of Islam and the challenge to it by Europe and modernity. To begin with, he outlines the basic precepts of Islam and describes some of its most powerful features, such as the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, "the largest multinational gathering of human beings on the face of the earth today"; the "simplicity and practicality and adaptability" of Islam; and the Sufi (mystical) brotherhoods which, according to him, have performed three crucial tasks in recent centuries:

> They prevented Islam from becoming a cold and formal doctrine, keeping it alive as an intimate, compassionate faith; they were mainly responsible for spreading the faith in east Asia and sub-Saharan Africa; and they were among the foremost leaders in Islam's military and political battles against the encroaching power of the Christian West.

The challenge of the Christian West and Muslim responses to it make up the second preliminary topic. Activities by Christian missionaries and direct European political control over Muslim lands have long been recognized as threats to Muslim culture. But more than these, Jansen argues, it was the colonialist elimination of Islam from the classroom that imperiled the faith. This policy was most consistently pursued in Algeria, where the French had some success in eradicating the Arabic language and emasculating Islam.

European challenges forced Muslims to reconsider some aspects of their religion, but, Jansen holds, "Islam does not as yet seem to have found an answer to the overall challenge of Western civilization and modernization." This failure follows from the fact that until recently most Muslim leaders were either secular nationalists, interested in Islam only to exploit it for political purposes (Bhutto and Sadat come to mind), or *ulema* (Muslim men of religion) who had too little experience of the modern world to come to terms with it.

Of late, however, efforts to rethink Islam have increased; the last part of the book explores these. The reformist groups who are the heroes of *Militant Islam* include the Muslim Brethren in Egypt, al-Maududi's *Jama'at-i Islami* in Pakistan, and "with reservations, the Libya of Colonel Qaddafi," as well as others in Morocco, Jordan, Iran, and Indonesia:

> These men and groups, though Westernized are not Westernizers but modernizers; though Islamic believers, they are not fundamentalists but reformers. . . . What unifies them is an attempt to make Islam, which is indubitably alive today, relevant to the special needs of today.

Jansen sympathetically reviews the activities and doctrines of these groups and takes it upon himself to convince Western readers that their efforts are "laudable or at least understandable."

JANSEN packs a great deal of information into two hundred pages; indeed, the wealth of detail, ranging across the full extent of the Muslim world, is the most valuable aspect of the book. Yet the abundance of information cannot be relied upon; serious mistakes and dubious assertions occur every few pages. Two examples: "inter-Muslim wars have been surprisingly few," a bizarre statement coming from anyone who has so much as leafed through a book on the history of Muslims. Or, listing Muslim military reverses before 1500, Jansen ignores the Mongol catastrophe of the 13th century, when a majority of Muslims came under alien rule, with incalculable consequences for Islam.

Modern history receives equally cavalier treatment. How can "every single Muslim state" except Egypt be the sworn enemy of Israel when Turkey maintains diplomatic relations with Israel and numerous black African Muslim states did so too until pressured by the Arabs to break them off? How can Palestine be an exception to the general pattern of Muslim leaders' spearheading the struggle against Europeans when Hajj Amin al-Husaini, Mufti of Jerusalem and head of the Supreme Muslim Council from 1922 to 1937, was for long the preeminent Arab leader against Jews and the British? The *ulema*, we are told, "are a respected body of men in every Muslim country except Turkey and possibly Afghanistan and South Yemen"; what, then, of Albania and Guinea, both two-thirds Muslim, in one of which the *ulema* have been utterly eliminated and in the other repressed far more severely than in Turkey?

On a lesser level but also distressing, the author persistently mistranslates Arabic words; perhaps the most amusing is "the Society of the Muslim Brothers," which comes out in his Arabic as "the Magazine of the Muslim Brothers." Dozens of minor factual and typographical errors dot the book's pages, further eroding confidence in Jansen's reliability.

WHILE the preceding are merely errors of fact, Jansen's more general pronouncements on Islam are even more untrustworthy. The statement that "all Muslim monarchies, whatever their pretensions to religiosity, have been totally un-Islamic" implies that Islam requires a republic and forbids the passing on of political power within a family. Not only is this nonsense for Sunni Islam (which has no rules for choosing a leader), but it ignores the fact that some Shi'is believe in divine kingship (as in Yemen until 1962) and their religious doctrines *require* monarchism.

A final preposterous statement: in order to modernize Islam, Jansen says that Muslims must cast out the dogma that "every single word of the Qur'an is of divine inspiration." Yet the several attempts to do just this (mostly notably by Taha Hussein in Egypt, an incident of which Jansen apparently has not heard) have met with thundering rejection, and for good reason. The truth of the Qur'an cannot be called into question by Muslims in the way that Jews and Christians question the Bible. The Qur'an is more than the Bible; it is the ultimate fact of Islam, comparable to the Covenant in Judaism or Jesus in Christianity—the element without which there simply is no religion.

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The Qur'an *is* Islam. Calling it into question strikes at the roots of the faith, something no believer can tolerate.

Jansen persistently asks Westerners to understand Islam, yet he approves of Muslim intolerance toward the West. While he derides as an "atavistic stereotype" the 19th-century European image of "licentious Turks lolling in the harem with their odalisques," he condones the equally shallow Muslim view of the West "as a source of decadence and muddled values."

PERHAPS most indicative of the disturbing and unsatisfactory nature of this book is the passage in which Jansen urges that writers on Islam declare their interest. He calls for this because he suspects that scholars who favor Israel (he specifically mentions Bernard Lewis) are not objective when it comes to Islam. Their alleged mischief is all the greater because nothing external gives them away:

> The Arab authors, of course, stand out because of their names, and their works tend to be taken automatically as being partisan and propagandist. Such is not the case with the Israeli or pro-Israeli writer: their [*sic*] works are accepted as the product of objective scholarship, which in very many cases, they are not.

Aside from the obnoxious assumption that pro-Israel sentiment implies a bias against Islam, this argument reads most strangely in the light of the following facts: Godfrey H. Jansen is a citizen of India and a Muslim. He is undoubtedly aware that his name makes him appear British and Christian, and surely he knows that his book would be taken differently if his identity were revealed, yet he does nothing to advise the reader of it. In view of the passage quoted above, Jansen's silence borders on duplicity.

Absorbed with efforts to reconcile Islam with modernity, Jansen ignores the really significant new trends in Islam: Muslim militancy against non-Muslims (as in Chad, Lebanon, Eritrea, the Ogaden, Cyprus, Afghanistan, Thailand, the Philippines, as well as against Israel and India) and Muslim militancy against Western cultural influences in order wholly to reestablish the Muslim way of life (a movement exemplified by the Ayatollah Khomeini). A book on the recent changes in the Muslim world would indeed merit the title *Mititant Islam*, but this is regrettably not the book Jansen has written.

The Faith of a Modernist

SELECTED PAPERS. By MEYER SCHAPIRO. *Braziller.* I. ROMANESQUE ART. *368 pp. $30.00.* II. MODERN ART: 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES. *277 pp. $20.00.* III. LATE ANTIQUE, EARLY CHRISTIAN, AND MEDIEVAL ART. *414 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by DAN HOFSTADTER

OVER the past few years three volumes of historical and critical writings by Meyer Schapiro have been published under the daunting title, *Selected Papers*; a fourth and final installment, on the theory and philosophy of art, is due in about a year. One of the acknowledged masters of academic art history, a man who can be mentioned in the same breath as E.H. Gombrich or Erwin Panofsky, Schapiro, during his over fifty years in the art-history department at Columbia University, has acquired a considerable reputation for eloquence and wisdom, though never before has he made his writings available to the general public.

The designation "papers" is a bit misleading, for though many of Schapiro's writings collected here are highly erudite and hard for the layman to follow, others are full-blooded essays, with all the richness, rigor, and sense of expectancy that the essay shares with the sonata. And if they have been conceived in two different manners of expression, the papers also deal with two widely separated periods, the medieval and the modern. This may at first seem odd, until we observe what Schapiro has chosen *not* to study, namely, the vast epoch falling roughly between Mantegna and Ingres, the age in which the naturalism of a perpetually rediscovered antiquity reigned supreme. The exclusion of that age suggests that Schapiro is chiefly interested in those styles of Western art that have largely escaped the influence of classicism—not such an unusual choice for a modernist intelligence.

What *is* unusual about Schapiro is his position at the confluence of several streams of creativity. A man long celebrated in university circles, he has also been the friend of young artists still at the margin of society. (Willem de Kooning, the painter who confessed that his pictures were "never finished, only saved from disaster," was once persuaded by Schapiro that a certain canvas had already been worked to salvation and might soon be worked to death; to this vigilant sympathy we perhaps owe the preservation of a masterpiece.) And in addition to these activities, Schapiro has also made himself known as a critic. John Pope-Hennessy, chairman of the committee that awarded him the Mitchell Prize in Art History for *Modern Art*, was sounding a familiar theme when he declared that "of all living critics who have exercised a formative influence on our attitude to the art of the immediate past, it would be generally conceded that the most influential was Professor Meyer Schapiro."

Indeed, it is by now common to hear Schapiro described as our "most influential" art critic. Yet the description gives one pause. For in what sense can an art historian who has never to my knowledge written any reviews, who has never had to stand empty-handed before brand-new art and explain it to a bewildered public, be called a critic? And how great is his influence in the area where it would generally be thought to count most—in the galleries and salesrooms of the art trade?

We may legitimately call Meyer Schapiro a critic if by criticism we mean, in his case, not the day-to-day exercise of judgment on recent work but rather the broader function of examining and explicating a visual culture. He is a critic as Pater and Fromentin were critics, and in this sense even his studies of medieval art constitute a sort of criticism. The question of how influential his ideas have been in the working art world is another mat-

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ter, harder to address; but a brief account of his aesthetic sympathies may perhaps provide part of an answer.

SCHAPIRO'S readers can readily find a summation of his critical position in the four general essays on modern art in the volume of that name. This is perhaps unfortunate, for these essays are to my mind overly abstract, even wearisome, and often dated—the projected fourth volume on the theory of art may offer more concrete insights. In the meantime, however, it is to the two volumes on medieval art that one must turn for most of Schapiro's hard visual analysis. Perhaps that is as it should be: because he is a man of reasoned sympathies, his writings about medieval art would have broad implications for contemporary criticism even if he had never written about modern art.

For over a hundred years, the reexamination of medieval art has been a crucible of modern sensibility: Ruskin, Morris, the Pre-Raphaelites, Pugin, Viollet-le-Duc, Mâle, Focillon, even Proust—all of them passed this way. In the early decades of this century most people who thought about the Middle Ages at all regarded the great medieval churches as products of a pious, communal way of creating in which every artist or artisan humbly fulfilled his organic role. Schapiro found himself unconvinced by this view: was *all* medieval art necessarily devotional? Of a carved pier at Souillac, the Romanesque abbey church near Périgueux, he wrote that it was "a passionate *drôlerie*, brutal and realistic in detail, an elaboration of themes of impulsive and overwhelming physical force, corresponding to the role of violence at this point in the history of feudal society."

One recalls, reading these lines, that Schapiro was an outsider, an American and a non-Catholic in a field dominated by French Catholics, and that the year was 1939. By 1947 his intuitions had cohered into a full-blown conception of Romanesque aesthetics, and he was able to write of "a sphere of artistic creation without religious content and imbued with values of spontaneity, individual fantasy, delight in color and movement, and the expression of feeling that anticipate modern art." The 19th-century belief that the medieval period had borne the modern spirit in its womb was thus retained, but in transmuted form: for the visual values that Schapiro discovered in the old churches prefigured, as it seemed to him, not evangelical Victorian niggling but secular Parisian modernism.

THE demonstration that much medieval art did not express religious feeling could probably have been accomplished by sound antiquarian technique; but it took a subtle eye, conditioned by keen observation of recent art, to remark something of still greater significance. Schapiro's scholarly predecessors, however warm their sympathy for the Romanesque style, had tended to judge it with standards imported from antique, high Renaissance, or Gothic art. These standards had congealed into a canon of rightness or good taste denoted by the French word *poncif*. *Poncif* means conventional, obvious, casually conforming to nature or to an idealized version of it, satisfying expectations generated by repetition, symmetry, stylized asymmetry, or an underlying geometrical schema. Schapiro discerned in this canon a "mechanical Platonism," a sort of rigid template against which Romanesque art was always found odd, at worst falling off from the antique, at best striving toward Gothic. Studying the carvings at Souillac and Moissac (another great Romanesque church) he came to reject this prejudice, and set out to show that the sculptors' departures from natural shapes had, as he put it, "a common character which is intimately bound up with the harmonious formal structure of the works" and is "subordinate to an essentially dynamic expressive end."

These words bring to mind some of the early propagandists for Cubism. But Schapiro was more rigorous than they in his exploration of an art based on freehand designing and subject to the pressure of spontaneous feeling. If one learned to look for "expressive wholes"—he used the term again and again—one could sense how the medieval artists had fitted archaic representation and remembered images to more naturalistic modes, how they had ignored *poncif* expectations, how they had harmoniously inserted different styles into the same work, how they had stretched perspective and scale in response to their aesthetic needs. From the lintel in Moissac's west front, a carved slab borrowed by the Romanesque master-mason from an earlier, non-Romanesque building, "we learn that the analogy of elements in a work of art is not necessarily pervasive or complete, and that stylistically unlike forms may coexist within a coherent whole." Clearly Schapiro himself had already learned this lesson, specifically from Cézanne's *Plaster Cupid* with its "abstract" lower left corner, and from Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* with its juxtaposition of African and Iberian elements. From the masterpieces of modern art he was extrapolating a general way of seeing.

THIS is not to say that Schapiro's writing can be reduced to mere advocacy; most of his work has, after all, been of an objective, historical nature. Yet even in the scholarly work a hint of advocacy persists: thus, the creators of the late antique Beth Alpha mosaics in Israel "must," as he writes, "seem ignorant," unless we "forget the prejudices of classic style"; in considering medieval Irish art we are to lay aside the "dogmatic norm of naturalism"; over and over again Cézanne is invoked as the hero of an art "without rhetoric and convention" and rooted in a "firm faith in spontaneous sensibility, in the resources of the sincere self." This faith Schapiro clearly shares.

On one of the rare occasions when he has said what he does not like, Schapiro writes that

> randomness as a new mode of composition . . . has become an accepted sign of modernity. . . . It is alluring in the same degree that technical and aesthetic features in figurative art . . .—microscopic minuteness of detail, smoothness of finish, virtuoso rendering of textures— . . . could satisfy in mediocre paintings a taste which was insensitive to relationships of a finer order.

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This idea, that taste can be mature or immature, bears the imprint of developmental psychology; and though he rarely mentions it, it is in this field, one suspects, that Schapiro has found the strongest confirmation of his sensibility. In *Modern Art* he quotes the neurologist Kurt Goldstein: "The sense of order in the patient is an expression of his defect, an expression of his impoverishment with respect to an essentially human trait: the capacity for adequate shifting of attitude." What is meant here by "the sense of order" is something like what we ordinarily call "compulsiveness." This is regarded as the symptomatic manifestation of a psychic weakness: the patient, sensing his vulnerability, compensates for it by clinging to an exaggerated orderliness or repetitiveness.

Of course few artists or art lovers are mental patients or even particularly compulsive people. But in citing Goldstein, Schapiro seems to imply that immature taste, though not of course pathological, is functionally analogous to a personality disorder. In other words, just as a neurotic may repeat the same action over and over to suppress anxiety, so an artist may become fixated on some stylistic trait, like microscopic detail or huge size, that helps him dodge the real task of expression. Such an artist has a benign version of the neurotic's complaint, and his work will probably strike perceptive viewers as curiously dull.

Schapiro's distrust of regularity in modern art—and randomness is a form of regularity achieved by relying on probability—stems from his intuition that it is an unhealthy masking of feeling rather than an expression of it. This aversion to modular composition is another inheritance from certain 19th-century medievalists, but once again it has been creatively transmuted. Ruskin, for example, disliked Perpendicular, a late-medieval English building style characterized by graph-paper-like decoration, largely because it looked machine-made —he called it "businessman's Gothic." Schapiro's fondness for spontaneous design has nothing to do with such nostalgia for the picturesque, but rather reflects a post-Freudian sensitivity to the workings of the psyche. Art can be symptom as well as expression.

Thus simplified, Schapiro's aesthetic position may seem obvious, even commonplace; that is only because it has come to command such wide respect. Still, there is something immoderate in the claim that he as a critic has exercised a "formative" influence on our attitude to the art of the "immediate" past. Of all the artists who have achieved recognition in the past forty years, Arshile Gorky is the only one discussed (and rather briefly at that) in *Modern Art*. And though Schapiro puts the case for sincere and spontaneous sensibility exceptionally well, this sensibility was clearly embodied in the works of the great Parisian modernists and explicitly championed by them in words. Picasso: "Have you ever really done what you planned to do? On leaving your house do you not often change your route without thinking about it? Do you cease to be yourself on that account? . . . I want nothing but emotion given off by my work." And while Schapiro has written some of the best Cézanne criticism, the master of Aix no longer compels automatic admiration. At the time of the Museum of Modern Art's 1978 exhibition, "Cézanne: The Late Work," one writer noted "the resentment his painting has generated among so many denizens of the New York art world. . . . Off the record a surprising number of them confessed that the show at the Modern left them dazed, depressed, annoyed. . . . The great man is not living up to certain expectations. . . ."

Finally, one should perhaps note that the values Schapiro espouses have been at an increasing discount for some twenty years, and that very few collectors are any longer concerned with seeking out new works of art that exemplify a "faith in the resources of the sincere self." There are no doubt many explanations for this. The simplest may be that Schapiro has himself kept aloof from the business of reviewing. Yet it is unlikely that even a critic of Schapiro's stature could stem the decline of faith in spontaneous sensibility—on the assumption that there is any sense to such a task. For if the core of modernism is to be taken as the union of spontaneity and sincerity, then the enterprise is doomed from the start; the awareness of purpose defeats both these qualities. This is perhaps one reason why, in our confusion at the imperative to be spontaneous, we find ourselves moved by the sculptors of ancient Aquitaine. They at least, when they engraved upon their porches the lilies of the field, knew them for the sign of a fixed truth.

Into the Past

From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Personal History. By Arthur Kurzweil. *Morrow. 353 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by Jonathan D. Sarna

Where once people struggled mightily to conceal their Jewish ancestors, today they devote the same energy to the laborious task of revealing them. The Jewish "roots" industry has indeed become a thriving enterprise. *Toledot,* a new journal devoted to Jewish genealogy, publishes four issues a year, and boasts a growing list of subscribers; Dan Rottenberg's *Finding Our Fathers,* the Dr. Spock of Jewish root-seekers, stands just below *The Jewish Catalog* as a symbol of America's Jewish cultural rebirth; genealogical inquiries pour into Jewish archives at an unmanageable rate.

Family trees do not sprout overnight, of course. Their growth and cultivation depend on precisely those traditional virtues which are otherwise unavailing in our age: persistence, ingenuity, and untiring patience. But if frustrations and false hopes abound on the genealogical trail, and weeks of wearisome research can prove fruitless, in the end the diligent win their reward: a large, many-branched, direct-ancestry chart adorned with illustrious half-forgotten names out of the past. Each and every name points neatly and inexorably in the direction of the single indispens-

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able figure who marks the last link in the chain: the researcher himself.

In this emphasis on self, amateur genealogists differ significantly from professional ones who generally follow a more modest course, employing descendant charts, stressing notable progenitors, and consigning succeeding generations to ever humbler positions. Malcolm Stern's *First American Jewish Families*, for example, awards pride of place to the early immigrants who toiled to create a better world for their children. Offspring, no matter how important they later became, are always relegated to lower rungs, fated to be perpetually overshadowed by their pioneering forebears. Biblical, medieval, and hasidic genealogy all work on the same principle. The elders—Abraham, David, Rashi, Isaac Luria, and the Baal Shem Tov—stand at the top; their descendants forever look up to them. The investigations of today's amateur researchers, by contrast, move basically backward from themselves.

The most recent (the publisher calls it "definitive") popular guidebook to Jewish genealogical investigation, Arthur Kurzweil's *From Generation to Generation: How to Trace Your Jewish Genealogy and Personal History*, illustrates this self-centered, tunneled view of history. The volume carries us from Kurzweil's own conversion experience—the discovery of his great-grandfather's picture in the memorial volume of the town of Dobromil, Poland—down through every stage of his laborious past-seeking quest. He traces his father back through the 18th century, his mother "back through some of the most illustrious rabbis of the past several centuries to the Middle Ages." The path is tortuous and full of strange twists, but like the climber of Everest, Kurzweil zealously pushes on, obsessed.

Kurzweil graciously takes time out from his personal quest to guide his readers along a protracted fact-finding tour designed to acquaint them with basic sources of information: relatives, *landsmanschaften*, libraries, archives, and cemeteries. Along the way, he offers historical tidbits, some wonderful quotations, a few outstanding photographs, and a ritualistic pep talk: "Be patient. You do not discover your family history overnight . . . slowly build on your collection . . . seeing that you have really built something to be proud of is what it is all about." But like the proverbial boomerang, this research always leads back to the same spot: one's own doorstep.

> Your family is the focus of this process; in tracing their steps, you are tracing the steps of the Jewish people. In tracing the steps of the Jewish people, you will eventually arrive at the beginning of time, and also you will arrive back in the present—at yourself.

NARCISSISM projected backward through time does not, however, explain the "roots" phenomenon; it merely places it in a larger context. Jews are searching for new modes of identity. The old answers, with their emphasis on community and social action, no longer satisfy. The hunt is on for something new.

For Kurzweil, that something new lies in something old. He not only identifies with Dobromil, he has also, in the course of tracing his ancestry, taken up its religious traditions and become a *baal teshuvah*—a born-again Jew. "Why," he asks, "in the year 1970 would a young man in his twenties, born and raised in New York suburbs, be elated at being called a member of a *shtetl*?" Kurzweil candidly admits to having "no answer." At least he has asked the right question.

Kurzweil is not alone either in his return to an older style of Jewish life or in his incapacity to explain it. Other rerooted Jews of today speak glowingly of the "intrinsic interest" and "deep meaning" of their new ethnic identification, or cite Hansen's Law: the third generation seeks to remember what the second sought to forget. But these are evasions. A fast-growing, heterogeneous movement, with devoted followers from various generations, a burgeoning literature, and a core of fanatical devotees must actually offer some special solace. Why else would so many people set out on this quixotic search?

A clue to the mystery may lie in the word "roots" itself, as typical of the 70's as the word "revolution," in so many ways its opposite, was of the 60's. The 70's, after all, saw the birth of the "roots" phenomenon in general, as many Americans, recoiling from the present, sought refuge in the past and its traditions. For Jews, disillusionment came with special force in the 70's, as many a universalist dream turned into a particularist nightmare. In response, Jews too retreated, turning inward, backward to the past. By searching for roots in the "old country," they were tacitly admitting what they had often previously denied: that American Jewry formed part of the web of Diaspora history after all.

JEWISH roots are unlike those of other people, however. The past would seem to offer little consolation to those whose relatives were destroyed in the concentration camps of Europe. Yet the current genealogical obsession does contain a puzzling undertone of nostalgia, a tendency to see Eastern Europe as an idyllic world gone by. Kurzweil's book is suffused with yearning for Dobromil as a lost utopia, a peaceful little *shtetl* with "dirt roads, and little houses, and people who stood at the *shul* while the Angel of Death was being plotted against." Is this an attempt to transcend history, to imagine the Holocaust away? The effort is understandable; the picture, alas, is false.

In this connection, one might mention as well the change that has quietly taken place in the image that many American Jews hold of Israel. If the Dobromils of Eastern Europe have now in some sense become their idea of utopia, not so long ago that place was occupied by the dirt roads, the little houses, and the pioneering spirit of the "typical" Israeli village. But Israel in its terrible vulnerability has become less of a dream and more of a constant worry, a community charge whose future well-being cannot be taken for granted with the same sense of assurance. It may not be too far-fetched to suggest that the romantic nostalgia which today colors the view of Dobromil owes something indirectly to this thwarting of the positive emotional investment

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many American Jews made in the utopia of Israel.

Jewish history has come full circle. Immigrants from Eastern Europe dreamed about America; their descendants dream about *der haym*. Immigrants Americanized their names to sever their ties with the past; their descendants have begun to re-Judaize them. Immigrants looked ahead to a bright future; their descendants look back yearningly.

There is a certain charm to the symmetry of it all, but it is also troubling. Retreat into the past is as perilous for the continuity of a people as abandonment of the past. Rootless Jews and Jews obsessed with roots employ opposite means to perpetrate an identical error: the substitution of a fragment of Jewish experience for its totality. No mere snapshot can do justice to the Jewish presence in history, only a ceaselessly moving film.

Electoral Politics

PLAYING TO WIN, AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO POLITICS. By JEFF GREENFIELD. *Simon & Schuster. 286 pp. $11.95.*

HOW TO WIN VOTES: THE POLITICS OF 1980. By EDWARD N. COSTIKYAN. *Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 256 pp. $12.95.*

WHO VOTES. By STEVEN J. ROSENSTONE AND RAYMOND WOLFINGER. *Yale University Press. 160 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by ELLIOTT ABRAMS

Two judgments about American politics have come, in this election year, to be widely accepted as descriptions of fact: that American electoral politics has undergone a fundamental change in recent years, and that this change is almost entirely for the worse. The evidence cited for these judgments includes such things as the declining turnout among, and alienation of, voters; the decline of the parties; the rising importance of television; the increase in the number of primaries; and the growing salience of "single-issue groups." Each of these developments, which are sometimes described as causes, sometimes as effects, has received considerable attention among politicians and in the press. Yet the judgment itself—that there has been deep and negative change—deserves more critical attention than it has thus far received. Three new books on American politics offer a useful opportunity to review the evidence.

Jeff Greenfield has written *Playing to Win, An Insider's Guide to Politics* with a limited goal in mind: "To pass along some useful lessons." This he does in a book filled with first-rate advice and marvelous anecdotes taken from American political history and his own political career. (Greenfield is a former aide to Robert Kennedy and John Lindsay, and has also worked with David Garth, to whom the book is dedicated.) In chapters on the uses of television, on speechmaking, on debating, and on polling, Greenfield offers sensible, intelligent counsel which would be of value to any candidate.

Greenfield has no reformist purpose here, and indeed his final chapter is a satire on reform proposals. (For example, he suggests having all one's supporters move to New Hampshire so that a victory in the overtelevised primary there can launch a presidential campaign without delay.) Not that he thinks the recent changes in American politics have all been good; rather, he thinks they have not been very important. Television, for instance, "has changed our political life far less radically than you've been told." He reminds us that the role of celebrities and of political symbolism in election campaigns long predate the advent of television; indeed, a look back at 19th-century election campaigns bears out his point that the overall "quality" or seriousness of campaigns has not in fact deteriorated. Even in TV ads, Greenfield argues, it is the issues that are "almost always decisive."

A VERY different view is taken by Edward Costikyan in *How to Win Votes: The Politics of 1980*. Costikyan is a prominent lawyer who has been the New York County Democratic leader and a candidate for the Democratic mayoral nomination. Like Greenfield, Costikyan offers an insider's collection of practical hints for handling such key matters as advertising, issues, and organization. The book is constructed around twenty-five "rules" of the new politics, on the order of "television reporting is not news; it is spectacle" and "only when there is no good reason to vote for one candidate over another is ethnicity important."

Costikyan offers many intelligent insights into American politics. Noting, for example, that politics now takes so much time it often destroys the rest of a politician's life, he comments that "more and more we are governed by people who do not share the lives of their constituents." His practical advice on using television is excellent, as he fully understands the demands of a medium that covers politics the same way it covers crime or sports.

But Costikyan's book is actually a much more ambitious effort than Greenfield's, for it is not only a practical guide but an effort to explain and explore the deep changes Costikyan tells us have taken place. "The politics of the 1980's," he says, "is a new, revolutionary politics, almost wholly different from the politics of the 1960's." What is the main difference in the new politics? "The key question for the politics of the 1980's and beyond" is, "How can I win some non-voters?"

For Costikyan, the phenomenon of non-voting is now central to U.S. elections. He appears to espouse the view that in our new politics, money and television have replaced issues and parties, and politicians today simply spout whatever the polls tell them people want to hear. As a result, all politicians sound alike, and all of them appeal to the groups (usually middle-of-the-road) most likely to vote. Since few politicians speak to the problems of non-voters, fewer and fewer Americans vote. Among the effects of decreasing turnout is the growing power of small special-interest groups which turn out in disproportionate numbers, and therefore "distort" election results.

Clearly Costikyan is right in suggesting that, in a low-turnout election such as a primary, the candi-

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date who can get a slightly larger percentage of his supporters to the polls will have a sharp advantage. This is simple arithmetic. What is not so clear is whether his other ramblings on non-voters and non-voting can stand up to scrutiny.

What, for instance, does "non-voting" mean: *never* voting, or voting in fewer than all elections, or voting irregularly? Are there significant differences on the issues between those who never vote and those who vote occasionally? These elementary questions are never addressed. As to why voting has declined since 1960, Costikyan's explanations are lame at best: "It seems the non-voters never acquired the voting habit. . . . Somehow, our society has failed to instill that [voting] habit in the post-1965 generation."

Costikyan is aware that political scientists have addressed the question of non-voting, and indeed he presents the results of a poll conducted especially for this book. What it reveals, ironically, is that "There is no angry majority of the disaffected ready to inundate the political process. . . . There is no wide gulf between voters and non-voters. There are no deep-seated ideological schisms." Why, then, does it matter who votes? Is the subject of interest only to campaign managers seeking to squeeze out a victory? Or because only a high turnout will dilute the power of special-interest groups? Does it, in the end, make any difference?

Who Votes, by Steven J. Rosenstone of Yale and Raymond Wolfinger of Berkeley, addresses these questions in considerable detail. This is a fascinating short study based on 1972 and 1974 Census Bureau interviews with 88,000 citizens —fifty times the number usually interviewed for polls. Rosenstone and Wolfinger have chapters on socio-economic status, age and sex, registration laws, and political culture. Using sophisticated computer analysis, they are able to determine which variables matter and which do not, and in fact to answer the question of who votes.

The answer is, above all, people who are educated. Income, race, and sex are *not* significant independent variables; education is crucial, and age is second in importance. Both youth and mobility decrease substantially the probability that an individual will vote. Blacks vote less than whites, in part because the black population is younger and in part because it is less well-educated.

Of particular interest is the authors' conclusion about the phenomenon of low turnout: on most issues, "voters are virtually a carbon copy of the citizen population. Those most likely to be underrepresented are people who lack opinions." The partisan impact of non-voting is marginal: Democrats are 51.4 percent of citizens and 51.3 percent of voters; Republicans are 36 percent of citizens and 39.7 percent of voters. This small GOP gain is the entire partisan effect of non-voting. On particular issues—medical insurance, busing, crime, welfare—differences are even smaller than this, in percentage terms.

What Rosenstone and Wolfinger cannot do is to explain why voting has decreased since 1960. "Our data describe only a pair of consecutive elections," they write. "Therefore we cannot ascertain what sorts of people are most responsible for the decline in turnout that has been a notable feature of American civic life over the past decade." They do examine one theory, namely, that what is responsible is the lowering of the voting age to eighteen, since younger citizens always vote in fewer numbers than do older ones. Turnout dropped by 5 percent between 1968 and 1972, they note, but the data indicate that the eighteen-year-old vote only depressed turnout by 1.2 percent, or one-quarter of the whole. Unfortunately they do not estimate the impact on voting of the fact that, due to the baby boom, people eighteen to twenty-four constitute a larger proportion of the population today than they did in 1960 or 1970. It is possible that this would explain an additional portion of low turnout.

If non-voters and voters tend to have the same views, and if the age of the voting population explains a portion of the low turnout, one is led to wonder whether too much is not sometimes made of the whole matter. After all, though turnout is down—from 63 percent in 1960 and 62 percent in 1964, to 61 percent in 1968, 56 percent in 1972, and 54 percent in 1976—it is still above the 52 percent of 1928 and 1932 (the year of Roosevelt's famous landslide) and the 51 percent of 1952. As Everett Carll Ladd wrote in a recent issue of *Public Opinion:* "Present-day turnout is not unusually low in the context of 20th-century American experience."

One wonders whether the issue of voter turnout really deserves all the attention it has been receiving lately in column after newspaper column and in books such as Edward Costikyan's. And one similarly wonders whether the recent focus on supposed changes in our political *processes*—more TV, more primaries, etc.—is not misplaced. If there is anything to be learned from the McGovern "reforms" of Democratic party processes after 1968, it is that they were aimed at capturing power not in order to purify procedures but rather to redirect policy. Only the fact that the policy goals were unpopular made it necessary to cover them with appeals to procedural fair play. Thus, attempts to gain more votes in Democratic party conventions by taking seats away from elected officials and instituting quotas for blacks and women were described as an effort to end special treatment for "big shots" and discrimination against minorities; what they really represented was a struggle for the power to dictate party policy.

With a new election coming, it is past time to stop focusing on who votes, who's from Washington, and how many women are on a delegate slate, and turn back to some fundamental questions in American politics: How large a government shall we have? How much economic growth? How shall we cope with Soviet power? The failures of recent years are based not so much on our "politics" as on our politicians and their policies. It is these which cry out for attention.

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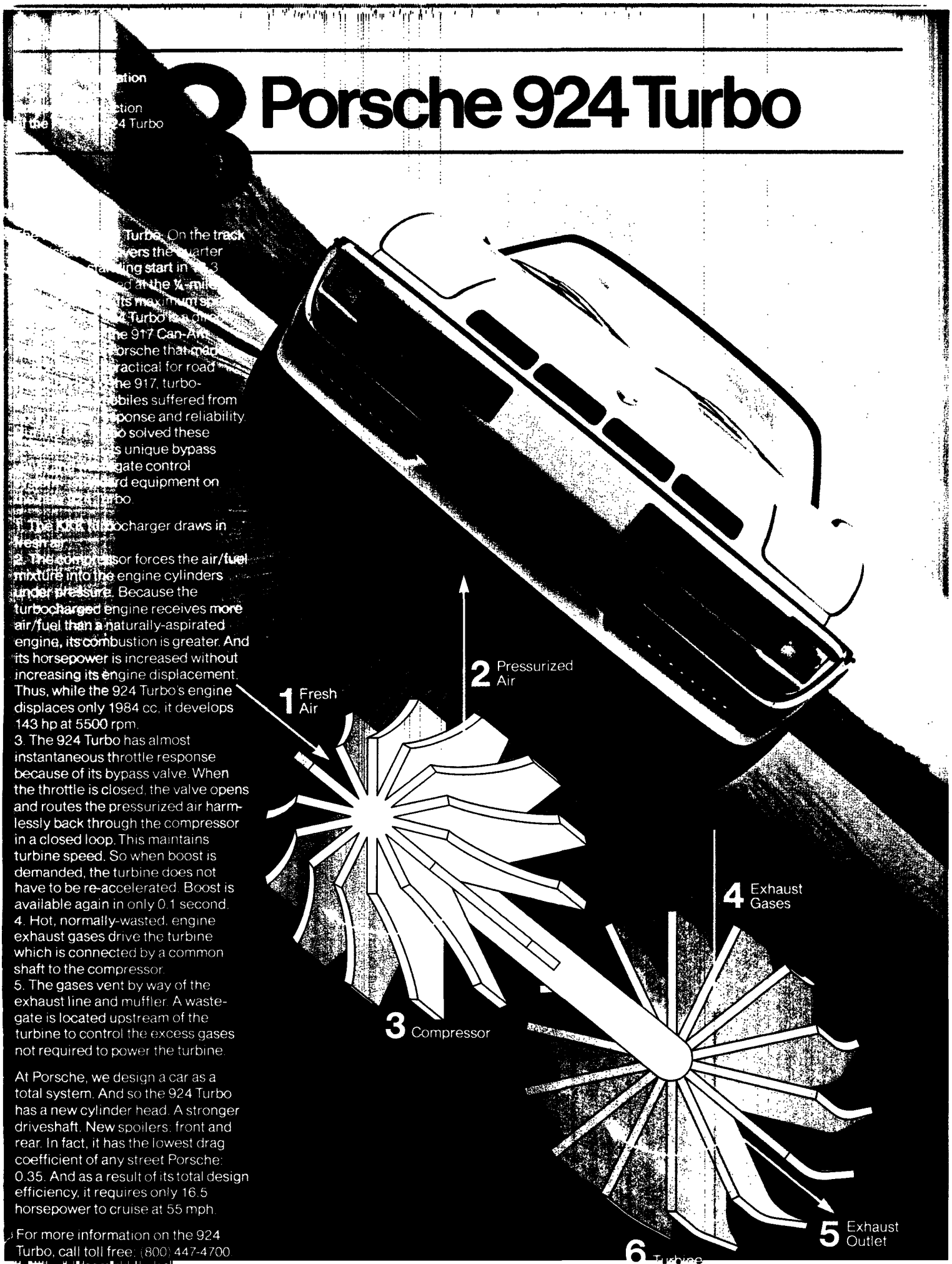
Porsche 924 Turbo



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1. The kick turbocharger draws in
2. The compressor forces the air/fuel mixture into the engine cylinders under pressure. Because the turbocharged engine receives more air/fuel than a naturally-aspirated engine, its combustion is greater. And its horsepower is increased without increasing its engine displacement. Thus, while the 924 Turbo's engine displaces only 1984 cc, it develops 143 hp at 5500 rpm.
3. The 924 Turbo has almost instantaneous throttle response because of its bypass valve. When the throttle is closed, the valve opens and routes the pressurized air harmlessly back through the compressor in a closed loop. This maintains turbine speed. So when boost is demanded, the turbine does not have to be re-accelerated. Boost is available again in only 0.1 second.
4. Hot, normally-wasted, engine exhaust gases drive the turbine which is connected by a common shaft to the compressor.
5. The gases vent by way of the exhaust line and muffler. A waste-gate is located upstream of the turbine to control the excess gases not required to power the turbine.

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